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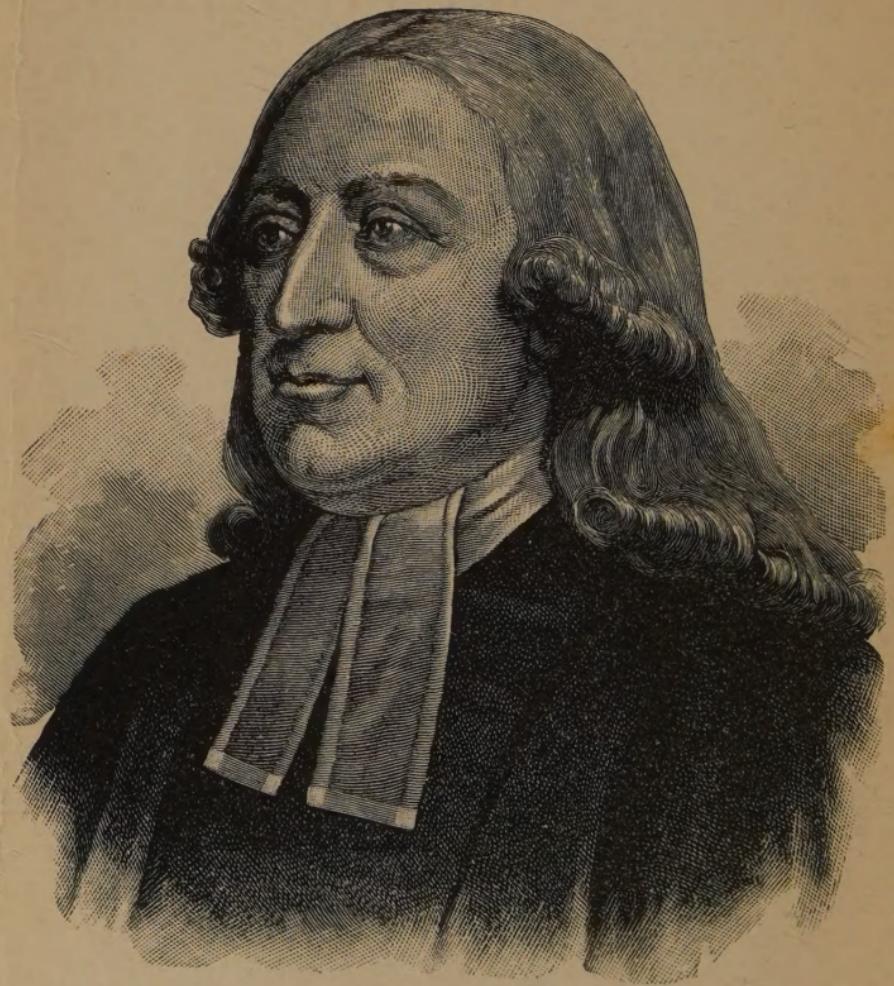
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JOHN WESLEY

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# MAKERS OF METHODISM

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BY

W. H. WITHROW



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*EDWIN A. SCHELL, General Secretary.*

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# MAKERS OF METHODISM

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## I

### A Foreword

METHODISM is, in a very special sense, the child of Providence. It is a happy feature in its history that it was not cradled in conflict, but was born of a religious revival. The origin of the Reformed Churches in Bohemia, in Germany, in Switzerland, in France, in the Netherlands, in Scotland, was amid the throes of civil war. This gave a degree of hardness to certain aspects of religion and left a heritage of bitter memories. While it developed much of moral heroism, it also developed much of the sterner side of our nature, and sometimes evoked vindictive passions. No one can be familiar with the stirring tale of the conflict between Romanism and Protestantism and of the strifes between different sections of the Reformed religion without seeing and lamenting that often reproach was brought upon the cause of Christ by the passionate zeal and lack of charity of Christian men. Persecution upon

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one side sometimes led to persecution on the other. Even the valor and fidelity of such heroes as Ziska and Gustavus Adolphus, of William the Silent and Admiral Coligny, of Cromwell and Knox, of Zwingle and of Duke Maurice of Saxony, were not unmarred by elements of human harshness and infirmity.

But, in the providence of God, Methodism had a milder and happier development. Not that it was without persecution and suffering. It had enough of both to develop the grandest heroism, the most intrepid fortitude, and the noblest endurance even unto death. Yet it never appealed to the sword. Like the great founder of Christianity, it turned its cheek to the smiter; it suffered with a quietness of spirit the very tyranny and rage of its foes. No tinge of iconoclastic zeal or of retaliating sternness mars the saintly character of the Wesleys and their fellow-helpers. Their spirit was that of St. John, breathing the benedictions of love. The motto of John Wesley was typical of his life and ministry: “With charity to all, with malice to none.”

Methodism was first of all a revival of pure religion in the hearts of a group of earnest young students of Oxford University. They had no wish to create a new sect or to make war upon the Church they loved. They sought

## A FOREWORD

its spiritual awakening and reformation. They preached from the parish pulpits, and when thrust from the Church of their fathers they preached on their fathers' graves, on the village common, in the market place, and by the way-side.

Methodism was not the result of political exigencies or of ecclesiastical councils. It was not framed by kings or potentates, by bishops or priests. Like its blessed Lord, it was born in lowliness, and grew in favor with God and with man. Many different types of character were among the agents whom God used in its development—the lofty and the lowly, the gentle and the simple, the learned and the illiterate, the rich and the poor. Among its founders were some of the most scholarly fellows of Oxford. Among its faithful preachers were also “unlearned and ignorant men,” as the world measures learning. There were such men as John Nelson, the Yorkshire mason; as Silas Told, the converted sailor; as Samuel Bradburn, the shoemaker’s apprentice; as John Hunt, the rustic plowman; and as Francis Asbury, the blacksmith’s assistant. From the lowly walks of life came many of the boldest soldiers of this new crusade—men who, like the herdsman of Tekoa, came from following the oxen and the plow; men from the smithy

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and the loom; husbandmen and fishermen, like the first disciples of our Lord; men from the mine and from the moor. Yet were there also those of wealth and noble rank, as Lord Dartmouth, Lord St. John, Mary Bosanquet, and the Countess of Huntingdon, and others in high places who, like the Magi, laid their wealth and titles at the feet of Jesus.

But, for the most part, this great revival came with its revelations of love to the souls of the poor. The common people heard it gladly. To the great heart of suffering humanity—burdened with its sorrows and its sins, with its sordid cares as to what it should eat, and what it should drink, and wherewithal it should be clothed; with its immortal hunger which the husks of this world could not satisfy; with its divine thirst that the broken cisterns of earthly pleasure could not appease—came the emancipating message of salvation, came the bread of heaven and the water of life. “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.”

In the pages that follow we shall select a few

## A FOREWORD

examples of the noble men and women whom God raised up on both sides of the sea to carry out his purposes of grace—to perform a great work in the world.

We cannot attempt anything like a complete history of the great world-movement of Methodism. That would require many volumes larger than this. The selection of certain Makers of Methodism involves the omission of others perhaps as noteworthy as some whom we present. We have endeavored to maintain historic sequence, although the periods treated have of necessity, in some cases, overlapped. The study of a few prominent actors in this great movement will illustrate its spirit as a whole, will give unity and interest to the narrative, and will prevent the distraction caused by the attempted characterization of a great number of persons.

As to authorities, we are chiefly indebted to the biographers of the several persons here sketched; to Bangs's, Stevens's, and Buckley's histories of Methodism; to the autobiographies of Mary Bosanquet, John Nelson, Jesse Lee, Nathan Bangs, and others; to Tyerman's *Wesley*, and to many review and encyclopædia articles.

II

The Condition of England in the Time of the  
Wesleys

IT is difficult to get a clear conception of the conditions amid which Methodism won its earliest triumphs. We may best succeed by comparing them with the conditions of to-day. The contrast between the tinder box and tallow dip of the last century and the lucifer match and the electric light, between the lumbering coach or carrier's cart and the express train and electric trolley, is typical of much moral as well as material progress. The wonderful invention of Watt, the greatest of the eighteenth century, has more than realized the wildest legends of Aladdin's lamp and the magician's ring. Applied to the printing press it has given wings to knowledge wherewith it may fly to the ends of the earth.

A journey to Land's End or to John O'Groats House a hundred years ago was as difficult as one to St. Petersburg or to Constantinople is now. Clive's great Indian victory was unknown at the company's office in London for many months after it was achieved; to-day the tidings

## CONDITION OF ENGLAND

of an irruption of the hill tribes of India or of a revolt of the Mahrattas throbs along the electric nerve of the world from Calcutta to Vancouver. The people of Shetland were found praying for George II when his successor had been a year on the throne; to-day the queen's speech is hawked about the streets of Montreal and Chicago on the very day it wakes the applause of St. Stephen's palace, and the President's message is read simultaneously in London and San Francisco. We are disappointed if last evening's news from Bucharest and Vienna, from Paris and Berlin, from Peking and Tokyo, with yesterday's quotations from the bourses of Frankfort and Hamburg and the exchanges of Chicago and New York, are not served with the coffee and toast at breakfast.

A century ago books and newspapers were the luxury of the few; they are now the necessity of all. No man of his age did more than John Wesley to give a cheap literature, that characteristic of our times, to the people. He wrote himself one hundred and eighty-one different works, two thirds of which sold for less than a shilling each. They comprised histories, dictionaries, and grammars of several languages, editions of the classics, and the like. He established the first religious magazine in England. His manly independence hastened the abolition

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of the literary patronage of titled know-nothings and of obsequious dedications to the great. He appealed directly to the patronage of the people, and found them more munificent than Augustus or Mæcenas, than Leo X or Lorenzo the Magnificent. He anticipated Raikes by several years in the establishment of Sunday schools. The Tract Society and the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge but carried out more fully the plans of usefulness which he had inaugurated. In imitation of the Moravian Brethren he also actively promoted the cause of Christian missions, but these were only the germs of those magnificent enterprises which, in our time, have brought forth such glorious fruit. The present century is especially the age of missions. Never since the days of the apostles have men exhibited such tireless energy, such quenchless zeal, in going forth to preach the Gospel to every creature. The miracle of Pentecost seems repeated, as by means of the various Bible societies men of every land can read in their own tongue, wherein they were born, the word of God.

The condition of public and private morals during the early part of the eighteenth century was deplorable. The veteran premier Walpole unblushingly asserted the doctrine that every man has his price; and his conduct was con-

## CONDITION OF ENGLAND

formable to his theory. Borough-mongering was openly practiced, and places at court and in the Church, in the army and navy, were shamelessly bought and sold. It was by no means uncommon to find ensigns in the cradle, who grew to be colonels in their teens. “Carry the major his pap” was a byword. Charles Phillips states that one of Provost Hutchinson’s daughters was gazetted a major of a cavalry regiment.

Few things are more painful to contemplate than the moral obtuseness of the court of the early Georges. From the king to the lackey there seems to have been an almost entire absence of moral sense. The card table was the main resource from *ennui*. Faded dowagers sat late into the night playing the magic cards. The Newmarket races were the haunt of profligacy and vice. So also were the favorite resorts of Bath and Tunbridge Wells. Immense sums were lost and won in bets. The fashionable literature to be found in fine ladies’ boudoirs was such as few now care to acknowledge having read. Intemperance was a prevailing vice. No class was free from its contamination. The ermine of the judge and the cassock of the priest were alike polluted by the degrading practice. The dissipation of the lower classes was almost incredible. Smollett

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tells us that over many of the spirit-vaults in the streets of London might be seen the inscription, “Drunk for a penny; dead drunk for twopence; straw (to sober off on) for nothing.”

Profane swearing was awfully prevalent. The judge swore upon the bench, the lawyer swore in addressing the jury, the fine lady swore over her cards, and it is even said that those who wore the surplice swore over their wine. “The nation was clothed with cursing as with a garment.” The profligacy of the soldiers and sailors was proverbial. The barrack room and ship’s forecastle were scenes of grossest vice, for which the cruel floggings inflicted were an inefficient restraint. Robbers waylaid the traveler on Hounslow Heath and footpads assailed him in the streets of London. In the northern part of the island reaving, raiding, and harrying cattle still often occurred. On the southwestern coast, before the Methodist revival, wrecking—that is, enticing ships upon the rocks by the exhibition of false signals—was a constant occurrence, and was frequently followed by the murder of the shipwrecked mariners. Although the mining population of the kingdom was greatly benefited by the labors of the Wesleys and their coadjutors, still their condition was deplorable. Many were in a condition of grossest ignorance, their homes wretched hovels,

## CONDITION OF ENGLAND

their toil excessive and far more dangerous than now, their amusements brutalizing in their tendency. Even women and children underwent the drudgery of the mine. For no class of society has Methodism done more than for these.

The introduction of gas has greatly restricted midnight crime in the cities. A hundred years ago they were miserably dark, lit only by oil lamps hung across the streets. Link boys offered to escort the traveler with torches. Riotous city "Mohawks" haunted the streets at midnight, roaring drunken songs, assaulting belated passengers, and beating drowsy watchmen, who went their rounds with a "lanthorn" and duly announced the hour of the night—unless they were themselves asleep. Bear and badger baiting was a favorite amusement, as was also prize fighting. Even women, forgetting their natural pitifulness and modesty, fought in the ring.

One of the greatest evils of the time was the condition of the laws affecting marriage. Prior to 1754 a marriage could be celebrated by a priest in orders at any time or place, without notice, consent of parents, or record of any kind. Such marriages fell into the hands of needy and disreputable clergymen, who were always to be found in or about the Fleet Prison,

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where they were or had been confined for debt. It was proved before Parliament that there had been 2,954 Fleet marriages in four months. One of these Fleet parsons married 173 couples in a single day. The scandal reached its worst in the seaports when a fleet arrived, and the sailors were married, says Lecky, in platoons.

The state of religion previous to the Wesleyan revival was deplorable. Even of professed theologians but few were faithful to their sacred trust, and these bemoaned, with a feeling akin to that of Nehemiah and the exiled Jews, that the house of the Lord was laid waste. One of these, the venerable Archbishop Leigh-ton, of pious memory, in pathetic terms laments over the national Church as “a fair carcase without spirit.” A sneering skepticism pervaded the writings of Bolingbroke and Hobbes, of Hume and Gibbon. The principles of French philosophy were affecting English thought. In the universities a mediæval scholasticism prevailed. Even the candidates for holy orders were ignorant of the Gospels. A hireling priesthood often dispensed the ordinances of the Church, attaching more importance to mere forms than to the spirit of the Gospel—to the wearing of a surplice than to the adorning of the inner man. Some of them were more at home at the races, at a cockpit, at a hunting

## CONDITION OF ENGLAND

or a drinking party, than in their study or their closet. It must not, however, be supposed that there were no redeeming features to this dark picture. The names of Butler, Lowth, Watts, and Doddridge would cast a luster over any age. But they, alas, only made the surrounding darkness seem more dark.

At this time the Wesleys entered upon their sacred mission. They carried the tidings of salvation to regions where it was before unknown. Amid markets, fair grounds, and coal pits they boldly proclaimed their message. On the mountains of Wales, among the tin mines of Cornwall, on the chalk downs of Surrey, in the hop fields of Kent, in the fenlands of Lincolnshire, in the cornfields of Huntingdon, on the wolds of Wiltshire, and among the lakes of Cumberland they proclaimed the joyful tidings to eager thousands. They adapted themselves to the capacity of miners and pitmen, of uncouth rustics and rude fishermen. They recognized in the ignorant and embruted the sublime dignity of manhood. From the ranks of those who were rescued from degradation and sin arose a noble band of fellow-workers—earnest-souled and fiery-hearted men; men who feared not death nor danger, the love of Christ constraining them.

Nor was this new apostolate without confess-

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

ors unto blood and martyrs unto death. They were stoned, they were beaten with cudgels, they were dragged through the kennels, and some died of their wounds. They were everywhere spoken against. Even bishops, as Warburton and Lavington, assailed them with the coarsest and most scurrilous invective. But, like the rosemary and thyme, which, “the more they be incensed,” to use the words of Bacon, “the more they give forth their sweetest odors,” so those holy lives, under the heel of persecution, sent forth a sacred incense unto God whose perfume is fragrant throughout the world to-day. Thus the influence spread till its great originator ceased at once to work and live.

The penal code of England in the eighteenth century was of savage ferocity. Its laws, like those of Draco, were written in blood. The death penalty was inflicted not only for murder, but also for treason, forgery, theft, and smuggling; and it was often inflicted with aggravating terrors. Among the causes of the increase of robbers Fielding lays much stress on the frequency of executions, their publicity, and their habitual association in the popular mind with notions of pride and vanity, instead of guilt, degradation, or shame.

The turnkeys of Newgate were said to have made £200 by showing Jack Sheppard. Dr.

## CONDITION OF ENGLAND

Dodd was exhibited for two hours in the press room at a shilling a head before he was led to the gallows. The criminal sentenced to death was encouraged and aided to put a brave face on the matter, and act on the maxim, *Carpe diem*—“Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.” Boys under twelve were hanged for participation in the Gordon riots of 1780. Mentioning the circumstance of Rogers, Mr. Grenville rather naïvely added: “I never in my life saw boys cry so.” “When Blackstone wrote,” says Mr. Lecky, “there were no less than one hundred and sixty offenses in England punishable with death, and it was a very ordinary occurrence for ten or twelve culprits to be hung on a single occasion, for forty or fifty to be condemned at a single assize.”

Persons now living can remember the gibbeting of murderers till the ravens devoured their flesh and their bones rattled in the wind. Political offenders were still more harshly dealt with. The gory heads of knights and peers were impaled on Temple Bar and their dismembered limbs on London Bridge.

Suicides were thrown into dishonored way-side graves, transfixated with stakes, and crushed with stones. The pillory and stocks still stood on the village green. Flogging was publicly inflicted by the beadle of the parish. The num-

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ber of executions was enormous. In 1785, in London alone, it was ninety-seven. After a jail delivery at Newgate scores of miserable wretches were dragged on hurdles up Tyburn Hill amid the shouts and jeers of a ribald mob, who either mocked the mortal agonies of the culprits or exhorted their favorites to "die game," as the phrase was.

Those exhibitions, so far were they from deterring, actually promoted vice. Mountebanks, gamblers, and jugglers plied their nefarious callings under the very shadow of the gallows and in the awful presence of death. On the outskirts of the throng John Wesley or Silas Told often exhorted the multitude to prepare for the great assize and the final judgment.

The condition of the prisons was infamous. Prisoners for debt were even worse lodged than condemned felons, and both were exposed to the cupidity and cruelty of a brutal jailer. In 1773 John Howard was appointed sheriff of Bedford. The horrible state of the prison pierced his soul. He forthwith burrowed in all the dungeons in Europe and dragged their abominations to light. They were the lairs of pestilence and plague. Men were sentenced not to prison only, but also to rheumatism and typhus. Howard bearded the fever demon in his den and fell a victim to his philanthropy, but through

## CONDITION OF ENGLAND

his efforts and those of Mrs. Fry, Fowell Buxton, and others a great reform in the state of prisons has taken place. Methodism did much for the prisoners. The Wesleys sedulously visited them, and Silas Told, the sailor convert of John Wesley, gave himself exclusively to this work.

In the following pages we will sketch briefly some of the Makers of Methodism; some of the men and women who in the providence of God were to change the moral aspect of Great Britain; who were to save the kingdom from an eclipse of faith and a possible carnival of blood akin to the French Revolution, which overturned both throne and altar in the dust; who were to impress upon the age, both in the Old World and the New, the stamp of a higher Christian civilization; who were to go forth with a passionate charity to remember the forgotten, to visit the forsaken, to lift up the fallen from a condition little better than that of beasts to the dignity of men and the fellowship of saints; who were to carry the everlasting Gospel to earth's darkest and remotest bounds; who were to bring to the dull ear of the world

“The songs of the Holy City,  
The chimes of eternal peace.”



SUSANNA WESLEY.

"The Mother of Methodism."

## SUSANNA WESLEY

### III

#### Susanna Wesley

THE record of woman's work and woman's influence in the Christian Church forms one of the noblest and most inspiring chapters in its history. No branch of the Church has been richer in holy and devoted women than has Methodism. To mention only a few of the illustrious names of its early years, we have Susanna Wesley; Selina, Countess of Huntingdon; Lady Maxwell; Mary Fletcher; Grace Murray; Dinah Evans, the heroine of *Adam Bede*; and Barbara Heck, the foundress of Methodism in both the United States and Canada.

One of the most notable of these, and most influential on the destiny of Methodism,\* was Susanna Wesley. She fulfills the poet's ideal of true womanhood:

“A perfect woman, nobly planned  
To warn, to comfort, and command;  
And yet a spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel light.”

---

\* “The mother of the Wesleys,” says Southey, “was also the Mother of Methodism.”

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

In the quiet rectory at Epworth, often amid straitened circumstances and manifold household cares, she molded the character of those distinguished sons who were destined to originate a great religious movement which should regenerate the age in which they lived, and send its waves of beneficent influence to farthest shores and remotest times.

In the eyes of some it will be a feature of additional interest in the history of Susanna Wesley that she was "nobly related," but no circumstances of rank or birth can increase the luster of her character. She was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, who was a nephew of the Earl of Anglesea, a noble lord whose pedigree goes back to the Norman conquest. Her father was noted at Oxford for his piety and zeal. He entered the ministry of the national Church and acted as a chaplain at sea. He subsequently preached in Kent and in two of the largest congregations in London, and was also lecturer at St. Paul's.

When the Act of Uniformity was passed, in 1662, Dr. Annesley was one of the two thousand English rectors and vicars who, for their fidelity to the dictates of conscience, were driven from their parishes and were persecuted throughout the realm. He became a prominent leader among the ejected Nonconformists, preaching almost

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daily and finding food and shelter for many of his impoverished brethren. After a half-century's service and many sore trials, from which he never shrank, he died on the last day of the year 1696, exclaiming, "I shall be satisfied with thy likeness; satisfied—satisfied." He was beloved and revered by all who knew him; and on her deathbed, his noble relative, the Countess of Anglesea, requested to be buried in his grave.

From such pious parentage was Susanna Wesley descended. The energy of character and intellectual vigor which she inherited she transmitted to her illustrious sons. She received under her father's care an education superior to that of most young women of her own or, indeed, of the present time. She was acquainted with the Greek, Latin, and French languages, and exhibited a discriminative judgment of books. An illustration of her early maturity of thought and independence of character is seen in the fact that, before her thirteenth year, she had examined the ground of controversy between churchmen and dissenters. She adopted the principles of the Established Church, and renounced the views on account of which her father had been driven from the parish and for which he had espoused a life of suffering and persecution. This change of opinion, however, produced no interruption

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of the loving intercourse between the affectionate father and his favorite child.

Miss Annesley, about the year 1689, being then in her nineteenth or twentieth year, was married to the Rev. Samuel Wesley, the hard-working curate of a London parish, who was in receipt of an income of only thirty pounds a year. The Wesleys were also an ancient family; probably, as is inferred from the "scallop shell" upon their coat of arms, descended from crusading ancestors. It is remarkable that both the father and grandfather of the Rev. Samuel Wesley were clergymen of the Established Church, who, refusing to obey the Act of Uniformity, were driven from their homes and pulpits. By the Five Mile Act they were prohibited from approaching their former parishes or any borough town. Driven from place to place, fugitives and outcasts for conscience' sake, they preached wherever they could, enduring persecutions similar to those with which the early Methodists were afterward so familiar. Four times was the father of Samuel Wesley thrown into prison—once for six and again for three months; and at length he sank into the grave at the early age of thirty-four. His aged father, heart-broken by his griefs and sorrows, soon followed him to heaven. Of such godly stock, on the side of both father and

## SUSANNA WESLEY

mother, familiar with persecutions and strengthened in character by trial and sufferings, was the founder of Methodism born.

A portrait of Susanna Wesley, taken not long after her marriage, presents a fair young face, with delicate features, of refined expression and almost classic regularity of outline, and with bright, vivacious eyes. A profusion of long and curling hair adorns a head of singularly graceful pose, "not without an air," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "of the high-bred aristocracy from which she was descended." A beautiful hand and arm support a book upon her breast. Her dress is simple, yet tasteful, like that of a well-bred lady of the period, equally removed from the worldly fashions of the time and from the ascetic severity which characterized some of the women of early Methodism. Dr. Adam Clarke describes her as not only graceful, but beautiful. One of her sisters was painted by Sir Peter Lely as one of the "beauties" of the age, but she is admitted to have been less refined in feature than Mrs. Wesley.

But the more enduring attractions of her well-stored mind, and of her amiable and pious disposition, surpassed even those of her person. She possessed a correct literary taste and sound judgment. She projected several literary works, which, however, the duties of a busy life pre-

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vanted her carrying into effect. Among these was one on natural and revealed religion, comprising her reasons for renouncing Dissent, and a discourse on the Eucharist. A fragment, which is still extant, on the Apostles' Creed, "would not," says a competent critic, "have been discreditable to the theological literature of the day."

Her sincere and earnest piety was her most striking characteristic. She nourished her soul by daily meditation on the word of God and by prayer. To this purpose an hour every morning and evening were devoted. Her letters to her children and her counsel to her sons on questions of grave religious importance evince at once the clearness and the correctness of her judgment. The respect with which her views were received by her cultured and filial sons proves the weight which they attached to her opinions.

The poetical faculty with which John and especially Charles Wesley were so highly endowed was derived from their father rather than from their mother, who has left no special proof of talent in this direction. With the Rev. Samuel Wesley, on the contrary, "beating rhymes," as he called it, was almost a mania. He was a man of extraordinary literary industry, and poem after poem came in rapid succes-

## SUSANNA WESLEY

sion from his pen. These found their way into print by the aid of Dunton, a London publisher, who had married a daughter of Dr. Annesley. He rendered Mr. Wesley, however, more valuable service by making him acquainted with Susanna Annesley, his future wife. Pope knew the elder Wesley well, and commends him to Swift as "a learned man whose prose is better than his poetry." His longer poems were a "Life of Christ" and a "History of the Old and New Testaments," written in rather doggerel rhymes; but his most able production was a learned Latin dissertation on the Book of Job. He possessed the rare distinction of having dedicated volumes to three successive queens of England.

One of these dedications procured him the presentation to the rectory of Epworth, with a stipend of two hundred pounds a year. This was a piece of great good fortune, for, as he wrote to the Archbishop of York, "he had had but fifty pounds a year for six or seven years together, and one child, at least, per annum." Yet he welcomed each addition to his family as a gift from God, and bravely struggled to provide bread for the constantly increasing number of hungry mouths.

Even when living with his wife and child in lodgings in London, on an income of thirty

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pounds a year, his sturdy and hereditary independence was manifest. He was offered preferment by the court party if he would read from the pulpit King James the Second's famous Declaration of Indulgence. But believing it to be a design to favor the Roman Catholics, as indeed it was, he not only refused to read it, but denounced it in a sermon on the words of the three Hebrew children concerning the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar. The High Church notions of Samuel Wesley, like those of his wife, were the result, therefore, of conviction, and not of self-interest.

In the little rectory of Epworth was reproduced one of the noblest phases of what Coleridge has called the one sweet idyl of English society—life in a country parsonage. Here in a quiet round of domestic joys and religious duties was trained, for usefulness and for God, a numerous family, numbering in all nineteen children. Mr. Wesley was zealous in pulpit and pastoral labors and bold in rebuking sin, whether in lofty or lowly. Evil livers, to whom the truth was obnoxious, soon resented his plainness. They wounded his cattle, twice set fire to his house, and fired guns and shouted beneath his windows. For a small debt he was arrested, while leaving his church, and thrown into prison, where he remained three months.

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"Now I am at rest," he wrote from his cell to the Archbishop of York, "for I have come to the haven where I have long expected to be." But he immediately began to minister to the spiritual wants of his fellow-prisoners, to whom



EPWORTH RECTORY.

he read prayers daily and preached on Sunday. He was greatly sustained by the sympathy and fortitude of his noble wife. "It is not everyone," he wrote again to the archbishop, "who could bear these things; but, I bless God, my wife is less concerned with suffering them than

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I am in writing, or than, I believe, your grace will be in reading them." "When I came here," he writes again, "my stock was but little above ten shillings, and my wife at home had scarce so much. She soon sent me her rings, because she had nothing else to relieve me with, but I returned them."

The Epworth rectory was a humble, thatch-roofed building of wood and plaster, and venerable with moss and lichen, the growth of a hundred years. It had a parlor, hall, buttery, three large upper chambers, with some smaller apartments, and a study, where, we are told, the rector spent most of his time "beating rhymes" and preparing his sermons. The management of the domestic affairs, together with the often vexatious temporalities of the tithes and glebe, he left to his more practical and capable wife. That rectory family was a model Christian household. Godly gravity was tempered by innocent gayety, and the whole suffused with the tenderest domestic affection. "They had the common reputation," says Dr. Clarke, "of being the most loving family in Lincolnshire."

The center and presiding genius of this fair domain was Susanna Wesley. Like the Roman matron, Cornelia, she cherished her children, of whom she had thirteen around her at once, as her chief jewels. They all bore pet "nick-

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names," which were fondly used, like an uttered caress, in the family circle and in the copious correspondence that was kept up after they left home. The noblest tribute to this loving mother is the passionate affection she inspired in her children.

Her son John writes to her from Oxford, at a time when her health was precarious, in strains of loverlike tenderness, and hopes that he may die before her, that he may not endure the anguish of her loss.

"You did well," she wrote him, in unconscious prophecy, "to correct that fond desire of dying before me, since you do not know what work God may have for you to do before you leave the world."

By her daughters she was beloved almost with filial idolatry. Death and sorrow many times entered that happy home and several of the nineteen children died young, but upon the survivors was concentrated the affection of as warm a mother's love as ever throbbed in human breast. The children seem to have been worthy of that mother. They were all intelligent; some of them noted for their sprightliness and wit, and others for their poetic faculty, and several of the girls were remarkable for their beauty and vivacity. Fun and frolic were not unknown in this large

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family of healthy, happy children, and the great hall of the rectory became an arena of hilarious recreations. "Games of skill and chance, even," says Dr. Stevens, "were among the family pastimes, such as John Wesley afterward prohibited among the Methodists."

But maternal affection never degenerated into undue indulgence. The home discipline was firm, but not rigorous; strength, guided by kindness, ruled in that happy household. Mrs. Wesley superintended the entire early education of her children, in addition to her other numerous household cares. Her son John describes with admiration the calmness with which she wrote letters, transacted business, and conversed, surrounded by her numerous family. She has left a record of her mode of government and instruction.

"The children," she says, "were always put into a regular method of living in such things as they were capable of from their birth, such as in dressing, undressing, etc. They were left in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed in the house as sitting by a child till it fell asleep. From the time they were one year old they were taught to cry softly, if at all, whereby they escaped much correction, and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard. The will

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was early subdued, because," she judiciously observes, "this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done," she continues, "then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents till its own understanding comes to maturity and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind."

So early did this religious training begin that the children were taught "to be quiet at family prayer, and to ask a blessing at table by signs, before they could kneel or speak." At five years old they were taught to read. One day was allowed for learning the letters—a feat which each of them accomplished in that time, except two, who took a day and a half, "for which," says the mother, "I then thought them very dull." As soon as they could spell they were set reading the Scriptures, and kept at the appointed task till it was perfectly mastered. One of the girls, we are told, was able, in her eighth year, to read the Greek language.

The culture of the heart was no less sedulously observed than the culture of the mind. "The family school opened and closed with singing. At four o'clock in the afternoon all had a season of retirement, when the oldest

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took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom they read the psalm for the day and a chapter of the New Testament. She herself also conversed each evening with one of her children on religious subjects, and on some evenings with two, so as to comprehend the whole circle every week." The hallowed influence of those sacred hours is incalculable.

A high-souled sense of honor was cultivated in the hearts of the children. If any of them was charged with a fault, he was encouraged to ingenuous confession, and on promise of amendment was freely forgiven. The result of this pious home training was seen in the character it produced. Ten of the children reached adult years, and everyone of them became an earnest Christian, and, after a life of singular devotion, died at last in the triumphs of faith. "Such a family," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "I have never heard of or known, nor, since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."

This noble woman was deeply concerned for the spiritual welfare of her neighbors as well as of her own household. While her husband was confined in prison she opened the doors of her house for religious service. Sometimes as many

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as two hundred were present, while many others went away for want of room. To these she read the most awakening sermons she could find, and prayed and conversed with them. Wesley's curate and some of the parishioners wrote to him against the assembly as a "conventicle." She vindicated her course in a letter of sound judgment and good taste. "The meetings were filling the parish church," she said, "with persons reclaimed from immorality, some of whom had not for years been seen at service." As to the suggestion of letting some one else read, she wrote: "Alas! you do not consider what these people are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon through without spelling a good part of it; and how would that edify the rest?" But with a true wife's recognition of the rightful authority of her husband, she says, "Do not advise, but command me to desist."

The tranquil rectory at Epworth was not, however, without its visitations of sorrow. Time after time death visited its charmed circle till nine of the loved household were borne away. And there were sadder things, even, than death to mar its happiness. The beauty and native graces of several of the daughters led to marriages which proved unfortunate. In anguish of soul their sympathizing

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mother writes thus to her brother of this saddest sorrow which can befall a woman's life: "O, brother! happy, thrice happy are you. Happy is my sister, that buried your children in infancy, secure from temptation, secure from guilt, secure from want or shame, secure from the loss of friends. Believe me, it is better to mourn ten children dead than one living, and I have buried many."

The pinchings of poverty, also, were only too familiar in this family, and sometimes even the experience of want. The shadow of debt hung over it, and beneath that shadow Mr. Wesley sank into the grave. Although the living of Epworth was nominally valued at £200, it did not realize more than £130. How, even with the utmost economy, such a large family was clothed, fed, and educated on this meager stipend is one of the most extraordinary circumstances in its history. Yet these privations were borne not complainingly, but cheerfully. In a letter to the Archbishop of York this noble woman was able to say that the experience and observation of over fifty years had taught her that it was much easier to be contented without riches than with them.

It has been already stated that the rectory was twice fired by the disaffected rabble of the parish. It was on the second of these occasions that the

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future founder of Methodism was snatched, as by a special providence, almost from the jaws of death. Mrs. Wesley, who was in feeble health, was unable to make her escape, like others of the family, by climbing through the windows of the burning building. Thrice she attempted to fight her way through the flames to the street, but each time was driven back by their fury. At last, with scorched and branded hands, she escaped from the fire.

It was now found that little John Wesley was missing. Several times the frantic father strove to climb the burning stairs to his rescue, but they crumbled beneath his weight. The imperiled child, finding his bed on fire, flew to the window, where two of the neighbors, standing one upon the shoulders of the other, plucked him from destruction at the very moment that the burning roof fell in, and the house became a mass of ruins. Everything was lost—the furniture and clothing of the household and the precious books and manuscripts of the studious rector. But the Christian and the father rose supreme above it all. “Come, friends,” he exclaimed, as he gathered his rescued family around him, “let us kneel down and thank God; he has given me all my eight children; I am rich enough.”

The grateful mother consecrated the child so

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providentially rescued to the service of God. "I do intend," she subsequently wrote, "to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempt with good success."

While her boys were absent at the Charterhouse School and at Oxford University this loving mother kept up a constant correspondence with them. Her letters are marked by a special solicitude for their spiritual welfare. "Resolve to make religion the business of your life," she wrote to her son John. "I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in any tragedy." With such a mother, and with such counsels, small wonder that her sons became a blessing to their race.

After the death of her husband this saintly soul was spared for many years to aid by her wise counsels the novel and often difficult de-

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cisions of her sons. When the "irregularities" of field preaching were complained of she recognized the hand of Providence in the circumstances which made it a necessity, and stood by her son on Kennington Common as he proclaimed the Gospel to twenty thousand persons.

Adjoining the old foundry, the mother-chapel of Methodism, John Wesley had fitted up a residence for himself and his assistants in London. Here with filial affection he brought his revered and beloved mother, and sustained her declining years with the tenderest care. When unable to attend the services she could hear the singing and prayer that almost daily resounded through that historic building. Here, in the seventy-third year of her age, she peacefully passed away. "She had no doubt, no fear," writes her son, "nor any desire but to depart and be with Christ."

John Wesley and five of her daughters stood around her dying bed and commended her soul to God in prayer. When unable to speak she looked steadfastly upward, as if, like Stephen, she saw heaven open before her. With her last words she requested that her children should sing as she departed a psalm of praise to God. With tremulous voices they obeyed her last request, and her spirit took its flight from the toils and the travails of earth to the peace

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and blessedness of paradise. Her ashes sleep with those of the many illustrious dead of Bunhill Fields; and at City Road Chapel a simple marble monument commemorates her virtues.

Her noble life needs no words of eulogy. Her own works praise her. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Many daughters have done virtuously, but she has excelled them all. Her life of toil and trial, of privation and self-denial, of high resolve and patient continuance in well-doing, has been crowned with a rich and glorious reward. The hallowed teachings of that humble home originated a sacred impulse that quickened the spiritual life of Christendom from that day to this. The pulsing tides of its growing influence shall roll down the ages and break on every civilized and savage shore till the whole world is filled with the knowledge of God.

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The house in which John and Charles Wesley were born is still used as the rectory of the parish of Epworth. It is externally somewhat changed, a roof of tiles having taken the place of that of thatch of the olden time. It is at present occupied by Canon Overton, a liberal churchman, who has himself written a sympathetic life of John Wesley. The canon kindly gives courteous permission to the pilgrims to this Mecca of Methodism to visit the church and rectory. A few summers ago a number of Epworth Leaguers from the United States were cordially welcomed to these historic scenes. In this birthplace of Methodism the Wesleyan Methodists have a commodious and elegant chapel and schools.

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

### IV

#### **John and Charles Wesley—Founders of Methodism**

THE Epworth rectory may well be called the cradle of Methodism. The group of boys and girls who gathered around the knees of Susanna Wesley may not unfitly be regarded as a type of the great family of Epworth Leaguers who are being trained up in the household of Methodism in Christian culture and Christian service.

Of the nineteen children of Samuel and Susanna Wesley several were in after life distinguished for piety, intelligence, and scholarship. Others were remarkable for wit and vivacity. The eldest son, Samuel, became a very learned clergyman and author of some noble hymns. Others also had poetic talent. Several of the children died in childhood, but thirteen of them were living at one time, and must have made the old Epworth rectory alive with youthful fun and frolic.

Two members of this remarkable family have won world-wide fame as the chief founders of Methodism. John Wesley, the elder of the two, born in 1703, is described as having a boyish turn for wit and humor. His brother

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Charles, five years younger, was exceedingly sprightly and active, and remarkable for courage and skill in juvenile encounters with his school-fellows. We have already described the



JOHN WESLEY AT THE AGE OF 23.

home training of this first Methodist household and the providential rescue of little John Wesley from destruction by fire.

When only thirteen years old "Jacky," as he is named in his mother's letters, left the sheltering rooftree of the Epworth rectory for the

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cloisters of the Charterhouse School, London. This was an old monastery, founded five hundred years ago. After its dissolution by Henry VIII it became the family seat of the Howards and the court of Queen Elizabeth and of King James. It was converted into a school for forty boys and an asylum for eighty poor gentlemen. It has an annual revenue of \$150,000. Among its famous scholars were Addison, Steele, Blackstone, Wesley, Grote, Havelock, and Thackeray. In Wesley's day the food for the brain was better than that for the body, and Jacky was nearly starved. He obeyed the wise counsel of his father, that he should run around the large garden three times a day. He thus got up an excellent appetite, even if he did not get very much to gratify it.

In three years he entered Christ Church College, Oxford, where he continued his classical studies. He became Greek lecturer at the university when a little more than twenty-three years old. In Hebrew, too, he was one of the best scholars of the age. About this time he was joined by his younger brother Charles. When John was twenty-eight and Charles was twenty-three the famous "Holy Club" was formed. It consisted of a little group of students who met together for the study of the Greek Testament, for self-examination, and prayer. Their methodical lives led to

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their receiving the epithet of “Methodists,” a name of contempt which was destined to become one of highest honor.

While Epworth rectory may be called the cradle of Methodism, it was at Oxford that it received its strong impress of intellectual culture. It must never be forgotten that it was in the first university of Europe that this child of Providence was fostered and trained. They were no illiterates, those Fellows of Oxford who met for the study of the oracles of God in their original tongues. With the instincts of true learning, having kindled their torches at the altar fire of eternal truth, they went forth to diffuse the light, to illumine the darkness, and as heralds to proclaim the dawn of a new day. The university crest has in this connection a prophetic significance. It is an open Bible with the motto, “DOMINVS ILLVMINATIO MEA”—The Lord is my Light. Though the mission of Methodism has been largely like that of the Christ of Nazareth, to preach the Gospel to the poor and lowly, it has been the better able to do this because it has sought to

“Unite the pair so long disjoined—  
Knowledge and vital piety.”

Amid the stately surroundings of Oxford—that city of colleges which has trained so many



CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE AND WOLSEY'S GATE, OXFORD.

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of the English scholars and statesmen—the Wesleys, Whitefield, Coke, and other early Methodist leaders received that broad culture, that sound classical learning, that strict logical training, which so efficiently equipped them for the great life work they were to do. This lends special interest to a visit to this Mecca of Methodist pilgrimage.

This venerable seat of learning, dating from the time of Alfred, the ancient Oxenforde—its cognizance is still a shield with an ox crossing a stream—has a singularly attractive appearance as seen from a distance, its many towers and spires and the huge dome of the Radcliffe Library rising above the billowy sea of verdure of its sylvan surroundings. A nearer approach only heightens the effect of this architectural magnificence. Probably no city of its size in the world presents so many examples of stately and venerable architecture as this city of colleges. Look in what direction you will, a beautiful tower, spire, or Gothic façade will meet the eye.

As we walk the smooth-turfed quadrangles and traverse the ivy-clad cloisters and the long rows of collegiate buildings, and visit the alcoved library, the great halls, and the college chapels, we gain some suggestions of the atmosphere of learning by which the founders of Methodism were surrounded.



ENTRANCE TO HALL OF CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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Christ Church College, of which the Wesleys and Whitefield were students, is the largest and most magnificent college at Oxford. It owes its splendor to the munificence of Cardinal Wolsey, by whom it was founded when he was in the zenith of his prosperity. One enters Christ Church through Wolsey's "Faire Gate," well worthy of the name.

St. Mary's Church, in whose pulpit John Wesley often preached, is invested with some of the most memorable associations of the Reformation. From its pulpit Wyclif denounced the Romish superstitions of his day, and maintained the right of the laity to read the word of God, the true palladium of their civil and religious liberty. Two centuries later, when Romish influence was in the ascendant at the university, the martyr-bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, were cited here for trial before Cardinal Pole, 1555; and hither the following year the venerable Archbishop Cranmer was brought from prison for the purpose of publicly recanting his Protestant opinions.

"He that late was primate of all England," says Foxe, "attired in a bare and ragged gown, with an old square cap, stood on a low stage near the pulpit. After a pathetic prayer, stretching forth his right hand, instead of the expected recantation he said, 'Forasmuch as



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD.

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my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand, therefore, shall be first punished, for it shall be first burnt.' Having thus 'flung down the burden of his shame,' he was dragged from the stage, with many insults, to the place where he glorified God in the flames, after having been compelled to witness the martyrdom of Latimer and Ridley."

The Wesleys were familiar with this sacred spot. With Whitefield and others of the "Holy Club" they also regularly visited the felons in the public prison. Within these gloomy dungeons the martyr-bishops, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, were confined, and from it they walked to their funeral pyre. Here, we may be sure, the Wesleys often mused, catching inspiration from the example of those heroic men, and willing, if need were, to die like them for the Lord they loved so well.

The ivy-mantled gateway of St. Mary's Church is an object of strikingly picturesque beauty. The image of the Virgin above it gave great offense to the Puritans, and was one of the causes of the impeachment of Archbishop Laud.

But we must return to the personal history of John Wesley. In due course he was ordained a minister of the Established Church, and for a time aided his father, then sinking under the weight of years, at Epworth.

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

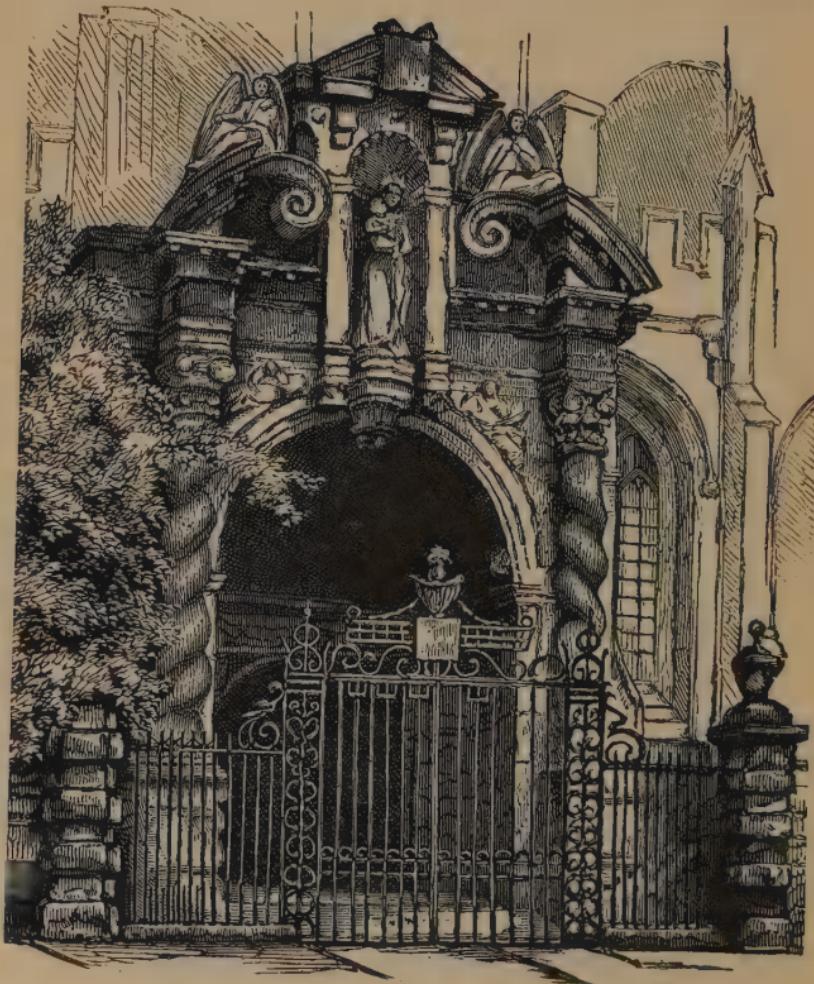
On his father's death he was invited to succeed him as rector. He was also requested to go with his brother as a missionary to Georgia. The decision rested upon the consent of his venerable mother. "I can be," he said, "the staff of her age, her chief support and comfort." But the heroic soul, notwithstanding her lonely widowhood, replied, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them again."

On board the ship by which the brothers sailed to the New World were a number of German Moravians with their bishop. The vessel became at once "Bethel church and a seminary." Daily prayer and preaching, the study of the Scriptures and Christian divinity, and instructing the children filled up the hours. During a terrific storm, which greatly alarmed the English passengers, the pious Moravians, even the women and children, sang calmly on, unafraid to die—a lesson which the Oxford Fellows had not yet learned.

Arrived in Georgia, the Wesleys devoted themselves with zeal to their missionary toil. They lived the lives of ascetics. "They slept on the ground rather than on beds; they refused all food but bread and water, and John went barefooted, that he might encourage the boys of

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his school—a condescension better in its motive than in its example." The matter-of-fact colo-



GATEWAY OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD.

nists did not appreciate such ascetic piety, and the Wesleys soon found it expedient to return to England.

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"I went to America," wrote John Wesley in his Journal, "to convert the Indians, but, O, who shall convert me? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled, nor can I say to die is gain." Yet he continued to preach and pray, though suffering great disquietude of soul. He renewed his acquaintance with the Moravians by attending their services in London. One evening a layman was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. Wesley writes: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, and Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Thus not until his thirty-fifth year did he obtain that full assurance of faith which he so long had sought, and which he was to preach, a flaming herald of the cross, throughout the land. "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say," writes Lecky in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, "that the scene which took place in that humble meeting in Aldergate Street forms an epoch in English history. The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and active intellects in England is the true source of English Methodism."

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Deeply impressed with the piety of the Moravians, Wesley determined to visit their chief settlement at Herrnhut, in Bohemia. His soul was strengthened by their devout companionship. "I would gladly," he said, "have spent my life here, but my Master calling me to labor in other parts of his vineyard, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place."

A new note was now heard in his sermons. To the condemned felons of Newgate, as well as to the decorous congregations in the churches, he preached repentance, the remission of sins, and free salvation. Joined by his brother Charles and George Whitefield, he went everywhere preaching with strange power this new evangel of the grace of God.

In 1739 John Wesley dedicated the first place of worship for the people called Methodists, and organized the first Methodist society. His own account of this important event is as follows: "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London, and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; this was the rise of the United Society." This is recorded as the epoch of Methodism from which its corporate organization dates.

The origin of any important institution, the birthplace of any great movement or great man,

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will ever engage the profoundest attention of the human mind. Hence men visit with eager interest the cradle-lands of the race, they contemplate with patriotic pride the field of Runnymede, they make long pilgrimages to the humble cottage in which the Bard of Avon or the Bard of Ayr was born. With not less reverent feelings should we visit the cradle of the greatest religious movement of modern times.

The first home of Methodism was, indeed, very humble, suggesting analogies with the lowly beginnings of Christianity itself—the manger of Bethlehem and the cottage home of Nazareth. Early in 1739 John Wesley was urged to secure the old Foundry, Moorfields, London, as a place of worship. This was a large, rambling pile of buildings, near the site of the present City Road Chapel. Wesley's only regular income was £28 a year, from his Oxford fellowship. The sum required for the purchase of the Foundry was £115; but, full of faith, he assumed the debt, and, some friends coming to his aid, nearly £700 was expended in fitting it up for worship. Instead of the clang of anvils and roar of furnaces, employed in the manufacture of the deadly enginery of war, its walls were to echo to the holy hymns and the glad evangel of the Gospel of peace.

Part of the building was fitted up with desks

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for a school. Here for seven years Silas Told taught a number of charity children, from six in the morning till five in the evening, for the salary of ten shillings a week. Part was afterward fitted up as a book room for the sale of Mr. Wesley's publications. A dispensary and almshouse for the poor was also part of the establishment, where, in 1748, were nine widows, one blind woman, and two poor children. "I might add," says Wesley, "four or five preachers, for I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food and at the same table; and we rejoice therein, as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom." A savings bank and loan fund were also established. High up near the roof were apartments for Mr. Wesley, in which his mother died. There was also accommodation for the assistant preachers and for domestics.

To this rude and ruinous structure, in the dark London mornings and evenings, multitudes of God-fearing Methodists wended their way by the dim light of their candle or oil lanterns, over the ill-paved streets, to the services; and here multitudes of souls were converted to God. The Foundry society numbered, in 1743, no less than twenty-two hundred members, meeting in sixty-six classes.

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The “irregularities” of the new apostle soon caused the closure of many churches against him. Charles Wesley was ejected from his curacy and threatened with excommunication by the Archbishop of Canterbury. When driven from the churches, the zealous evangelists went everywhere preaching the word—in the market places, on the hillsides, on the broad commons, wherever men would listen, and often where they would not.

John Wesley was soon called to sanction a new departure—that of lay preaching. Thomas Maxfield, one of his gifted helpers, during Wesley’s absence from the Foundry in London, occupied the pulpit—to the great benefit of the large congregations. Wesley hearing of this new irregularity, and strong in his sentiments of churchly order, hastened to London to put a stop to the innovation. His wise mother, however, read the signs of the times with a profounder sagacity than her learned son. “Take care what you do to that young man,” she said; “he is as surely called of God to preach as you are,” and she counseled him to hear and judge for himself. “It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth to him good,” the stanch churchman remarked, and another of his old prejudices was swept away. He at once recognized Maxfield as a son in the Gospel.

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Lady Huntingdon wrote of the eloquent preacher, "God has rised from the stones one to sit among the princes of his people." Thus was begun that great army of lay helpers who have done so much in the old world and the new to carry on the triumphs of Methodism.

A no less important institution was soon originated in Bristol; namely, the Methodist class meeting. The organizing genius of Wesley —no less, says Macaulay, than that of the great Cardinal Richelieu—began to form his adherents into little groups for mutual edification and prayer, and for receiving systematic and regular contributions for the growing expenses of the Methodist societies. "This," writes Mr. Wesley, "was the origin of our classes, for which I can never sufficiently praise God. The unspeakable usefulness of the institution has ever since been more and more manifest."

Excluded from the Epworth Church, where his own father had so long been rector, John Wesley took his stand upon his father's tombstone, and day after day preached with such power and pathos that many of his hearers "lifted up their voices and wept," and several dropped down as if dead.

Shut out almost entirely from the pulpits of the Church established by law, and Methodist classes and societies springing up in all direc-

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tions, John Wesley framed the General Rules of the United Societies, which have become a part of the constitution of the Methodist Churches throughout the world. This is one of the most simple and catholic formulæ of faith recorded in the annals of Christendom. As John Wesley remarks in his Journal, "O, that we may never make anything more or less the term of union with us but the having the mind that was in Christ, and the walking as he walked."

Traveling preachers and lay helpers rapidly multiplied, and chapels were, in course of time, erected in the chief centers of population. But while many heard the word gladly others were moved to intensest hostility. The persecutions of the early Methodists were akin to those of the primitive Christians. "At Sheffield," John Wesley writes, "hell from beneath was moved to oppose us." Stones and other missiles were thrown into the church. To save the building and the people he gave notice that he would preach out of doors, and look the enemy in the face. A military officer rushed at the elder Wesley and presented his sword at the preacher's breast. Wesley, undaunted, threw open his vest and calmly said, "I fear God and honor the king." "The rioters resolved to pull down the preaching house, and set to their work," he writes, "while we were preaching and praising

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God. It was a glorious time with us. Every word and exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was sealed. The rabble raged all night, and by morning had pulled down one end of the house, and soon not a stone remained upon another."

Next morning he was preaching as usual at five o'clock. The rioters smashed in the windows of his dwelling and threatened to tear it down, but the preacher fell asleep in five minutes in the dismantled room. "I feared no cold," he writes, "but dropped to sleep with that word, 'Scatter Thou the people that delight in war.' "

Charles Wesley, though constitutionally a timid man, was bold as a lion in the discharge of duty, and shared with unflinching courage the persecutions of the Methodist preachers. Having met with an accident in Bristol, he was unable for a time to walk. He was, however, carried about from place to place, preaching daily on his knees. "The word of God," he wrote, "is not bound, if I am, but runs very swiftly." At St. Ives, in Cornwall, the chapel was utterly demolished, and the worshipers were beaten and trampled on without mercy. At length "the ruffians fell to quarreling among themselves, broke the head of the town clerk, and drove one another out of the room." Often the clergy and wardens of the Established

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

Church headed the rabble. At Poole "the church record bears to this day an entry of expenses at the village inn for drinks to the mob and its leader for driving out the Methodists." Yet nowhere were more glorious triumphs won for Methodism than in this county of Cornwall. Its bitterest persecutors became its most stalwart defenders.

At Wednesbury John Wesley was attacked at night in a pelting storm by an overwhelming mob of colliers and others. "A strong man aimed several blows with an oak bludgeon at the back of his head. One of them would probably have been fatal, but they were all turned aside, Wesley says, he knows not how. He was struck by a powerful blow on the chest, and by another on the mouth, making the blood gush out; but he felt no pain, he affirms, from either more than if they had touched him with a straw. The noise on every side, he adds, was like the roaring of the sea. Many cried: 'Knock his brains out! Down with him! Kill him at once! Crucify him!' 'No; let us hear him first,' shouted others. He at last broke out aloud into prayer. The ruffian who had headed the mob, a bear garden prizefighter, was struck with awe, and turning to him, said: 'Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.' "

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The houses of the Methodists were attacked, the windows broken, the furniture demolished. His brother Charles writes of John Wesley:



JOHN WESLEY AT 40.

“He looked like a soldier of Christ. His clothes were torn to tatters.” Yet the timid, fastidious, scholarly poet of Methodism also went like a soldier into the imminent deadly breach, and preached from the text, “Watch ye, stand fast

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in the faith, quit you like men, be strong;" and again, at daylight, from the text, "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer."

On the outbreak of the Stuart rebellion of 1745 the most absurd calumnies were reported concerning John Wesley. "He was an agent of the pretender; he had been arrested for high treason; he was a Jesuit in disguise; he was a Spanish spy; he was an Anabaptist, a Quaker; had been prosecuted for unlawfully selling gin; had hanged himself; and, at any rate, was not the genuine John Wesley, for it was well known that the latter was dead and buried."

Charles Wesley was actually indicted before the magistrate because he had besought God to call home his banished ones. This, it was insisted, meant the House of Stuart.

Bishop Lavington threatened to strip the gown off one of Wesley's preachers for his Methodistic practices. Stripping it off himself he cast it at the bishop's feet, saying, "I can preach the Gospel without a gown." Lavington was charmed by his manly independence and agreed to overlook his Methodist fervor.

In Wednesbury the mob ruled for a week. The houses of the Methodists were pillaged and plundered as in a sack of a foreign town. Yet would the persecuted Methodists not surrender their religious convictions.

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The whole region was in a state little short of civil war. The London newspapers reported that these outrages were perpetrated by the Methodists themselves. The magistrates took part with the mob against the preachers. One of them offered five pounds to have the Methodists driven from town. Another shouted, "Huzza! boys; well done! stand up for the Church." At Thorpe one of the persecutors died in despair, and the rabble was appalled into quiet. At Newcastle Wesley proclaimed in the public square, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Beneath his burning words the ringleaders were melted into contrition. Yet so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed that Wesley's journeys soon became like a royal progress. The people who had mobbed him crowded the streets to bless him as he passed.

At Roughlee, a place rightly named, a mob thought to exact a pledge from Wesley that he would no more visit the neighborhood. He declared that he would cut off his right hand sooner. He was knocked down and trampled upon, but next day he preached, he writes, as he never did in his life before. At Devizes the mob brought a fire engine, flooded the rooms in which Wesley lodged, and demanded that he should be given up to them to be thrown into a

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horse pond. The wife of the mayor sent her maid to entreat him to escape disguised as a woman. He declined this doubtful method. More than a thousand men joined in the assault. "Such threatenings, curses, blasphemies," writes Wesley, "I have never heard."

The persecuted Methodists knelt down in prayer to await the assault. A lot of ruffians were over their heads removing the tiles from the roof. A constable appeared, and demanded a pledge that the preachers should return no more. This was refused, when they were conducted out of the town and went on their way rejoicing. Amid these tumultuous scenes John Wesley declares that "ten thousand cares were of no more inconvenience to him than so many hairs on his head." His countenance, as well as conversation, expressed an habitual gayety of heart.

During all these years of toil and persecution John Wesley maintained his connection with Oxford University as one of the Fellows of Lincoln College. Indeed, the thirty pounds a year which he derived from his fellowship was his only fixed income. One of the duties arising from this relationship was that of preaching in his turn before the university, even after his name was cast out as evil and everywhere spoken against. It was in the pulpit of the

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

venerable Christ Church, from which Wyclif, the Morning Star of the Reformation, and the martyr bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, had preached, that he in turn proclaimed the word of life. The last time that he preached before the university was an occasion of special interest. It is thus described by Dr. Stevens:

“Oxford was crowded with strangers, and Wesley’s notoriety as a field preacher excited a general interest to hear him. Such was the state of morals at the time, that clergymen, gownsmen, and learned professors shared with sportsmen and the rabble the dissipations of the turf. Charles Wesley went in the morning to the prayers at Christ Church, and found men in surplices talking, laughing, and pointing as in a playhouse during the whole service. The inn where he lodged was filled with gownsmen and gentry from the races. He could not restrain his zeal, but preached to a crowd of them in the inn courtyard. They were struck with astonishment, but did not molest him. Thence he went to St. Mary’s Church to support his brother in his last appeal to their *alma mater*. Wesley’s discourse was heard with profound attention. The assembly was large, being much increased by the races.

“‘Never,’ says Charles Wesley, ‘have I seen a more attentive congregation. They did not



INTERIOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, OXFORD.

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

let a word slip them. Some of the heads of colleges stood up the whole time, and fixed their eyes on him. If they can endure sound doctrine like his he will surely leave a blessing behind him. The vice chancellor sent after him and desired his notes, which he sealed up and sent immediately. We walked back in form, the little band of us four, for of the rest durst none join us.'

"In his journal of that day John Wesley says: 'I preached, I suppose, the last time at St. Mary's! Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of those men. I have fully delivered my own soul.' Such was the treatment he received from the university, to which he has given more historical importance than any other graduate of his own or subsequent times, and more, perhaps, than any other one ever will give it."

The Wesley brothers had hitherto been too busy in the service of God, and too unsettled in their mode of life, to marry. At length, in his forty-first year, Charles Wesley married the daughter of a Welsh squire, a lady of culture, refinement, and piety. John Wesley entertained a sincere affection for a pious Methodist matron, Mrs. Grace Murray. She, however, became the wife of one of his lay helpers, and Wesley, in his forty-ninth year, married a Mrs. Vizelle, a widow lady of wealth and intelligence,

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but of intolerably jealous disposition. Her ample property was secured to herself, and she was



RADCLIFFE LIBRARY, OXFORD.

made to understand that the great evangelist was not to abate a jot of his constant labor and travel. She soon grew tired of his wandering life. For twenty years she persecuted him

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with unfounded suspicions and intolerable annoyances. His letters were full of patience and tenderness. When she finally left him, with the assurance that she would never return, he wrote in his journal, "*Non eam reliqui, non dimissi, non revocabo*"—(I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her).

John Wesley made many visits to Ireland, and showed much sympathy toward the warm-hearted and impulsive Irish people. Sometimes he was bitterly persecuted by a Roman Catholic mob, but often he was astonished at their cordiality and good will. He describes them as an immeasurably loving people.

Thomas Coke visited the Green Isle still more frequently, and toiled without stint in preaching the Gospel. Thomas Walsh was brought up a zealous Roman Catholic, but became a no less zealous Methodist. He had an extraordinary facility for acquiring languages, and mastered, besides his native Irish tongue, English, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He rose at four in the morning, studied till late at night, laboring arduously during the day. He spent much time reading his Greek and Hebrew Scriptures on his knees; and was so familiar with the latter that he could quote any chapter or verse.

But it was not all plain sailing in Ireland. In

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

Cork a drunken mob ranged the streets shouting, "Five pounds for the head of the Swaddler." What was worse, a jury made the following presentment: "We find and present Charles Wesley to be a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of his majesty's peace, and we pray that he may be transported."

In 1744 John Wesley invited a number of his ministers and lay assistants to a council in the old Foundry at London in June. There were present four ordained ministers of the Church of England, who had cast in their lot with the Wesleys in their toils and persecutions, and four lay helpers. These faithful men remained together for five days, discussing questions of religious doctrine and polity. They avoided all unnecessary dogmatics, "confining their instructions to those vital truths which pertain to personal religion, as repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, the witness of the Spirit." Thus was held the first Methodist Conference, the type of many thousands which have since been held in the two hemispheres. Even then Methodism began to look forward to the creation of a seminary for the training of its ministers, nor did it rest till this became an accomplished fact.

So great was the growth of the London socie-

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

ties that Mr. Wesley made an appeal for subscriptions to the amount of £6,000 for the pro-



CITY ROAD CHAPEL, LONDON.

posed “new chapel.” At length the City Road Chapel was built near the Foundry, in what was then open fields, but is now a wilderness of

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brick and stone. This is the best known of all the Wesleyan chapels. It is a large, plain, and nearly square structure, without much attempt at architectural display. In the interior, on the walls all around, are numerous marble tablets in memory of the distinguished preachers who have ministered within its walls—John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher, Benson, Coke, Clarke, Watson, Bunting, Newton, Punshon, Gervase Smith, and many others. American and Canadian Methodisms are represented by marble columns in the restored structure. In the graveyard rest the remains of the founder of Methodism, of Adam Clarke, Joseph Benson, Jabez Bunting, and of many another whose life and labors were devoted to the glory of God in the service of Methodism.

In Bunhill Fields burying ground, just opposite, lies the dust of Susanna Wesley; also of the glorious dreamer, John Bunyan; of Isaac Watts, the sweet singer; and of Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe*. These three are probably the best known writers of the English tongue.

“City Road Chapel burying ground,” said John Wesley, “is as holy as any in England.” Aye, truly. From all parts of Christendom come pilgrims to visit that sacred spot. Beside the tomb of John Wesley grows an elder tree,

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

clippings from which have been transplanted to almost every part of the world—an emblem of the Church which he planted, which has taken root and brought forth its blessed fruit in every clime.

In this venerable mother church of Methodism for many years service was held, as at the Foundry, at five o'clock in the morning, and we have records of large gatherings assembling on Christmas Day at four o'clock, and again at ten.

In connection with City Road Chapel was the preacher's house, a very plain brick building. In a small room of this, used as a bedroom and study, John Wesley died. For over a hundred years it has been occupied by his successors, and the same plain and simple furniture—chair, table, and desk—that he used, are still to be seen. It has now been set apart as a Wesleyan museum and as a home for Christian workers.

It seems to bring one nearer to the springs of Methodism to stand in the old pulpit in which its early fathers preached; to sit in Wesley's chair; to see the room in which he died; the study, a very small room, in which he wrote many of his books; the very time-worn desk at which he sat; and then to stand by the grave in which he is buried. In the old parsonage is shown the teapot, of generous

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dimensions, from which Wesley used to regale the London preachers every Sunday. On one side is the verse beginning "Be present at our table, Lord," and on the other the words, "We thank thee, Lord, for this our food," etc.

Up to his sixty-ninth year John Wesley kept up his round of travel, amounting to five thousand miles a year, on horseback. After this his friends provided him with a carriage. "He paid more tolls," says Southey, "than any other man in England." The grand old man ascribed his health and strength to his out-of-door life, to his constant rising at four o'clock, to the fact that he never lost a night's sleep in his life, to his constant preaching, particularly at five o'clock in the morning, for fifty years, and, last, to his contentment of mind. "By the grace of God," he says, "I fret at nothing."

It is truly amazing that so venerable a man could be heard by so many persons out of doors. At Gwennap Pit, a great natural amphitheater, two hundred and forty feet in diameter, he was heard distinctly by over thirty thousand persons. At Moorfields, once the scene of reckless riot, there were thousands upon thousands, "and all was as still as night." In towns where once no Methodist could show his head he was welcomed to the pulpits of the Established Church. The allurements of rest

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and leisure could not detain his earnest soul. In his seventy-sixth year he writes: “I rested at Newcastle; lovely place, lovely company! but I believe there is another world. Therefore I must arise and go hence.” And the next day he was away, preaching twice before the sun went down.

He visited with diligence from house to house in the most noisome purlieus of East London. He had not found any such distress, not even in Newgate Prison. On his eightieth birthday he writes, “Blessed be God, my time is not labor and sorrow.” He felt no more pain or infirmity than at twenty-one. On his eighty-third birthday he repeats, “It is eleven years since I felt such a thing as weariness.” His hale and hearty old age was full of keen appreciation of nature and of the eager study of books, including the Italian classics and current literature. In commenting upon the picturesque scenery of his travels he reflects, “Nevertheless the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor ever shall be till it see the King in his beauty.”

When over eighty he made two journeys to Holland, preaching at The Hague, Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, and greatly enjoying the historic and patriotic associations of these cities. He knew everyone best worth

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knowing in the United Kingdom. At Lincoln he called on his old friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who highly appreciated his visit, and regretted only Wesley's economy of time. "He talks well on any subject," said the great moralist. "I could converse with him all night."

John Howard, the great philanthropist, before leaving England on his last "circumnavigation of charity," called at City Road to present Wesley with a copy of his latest quarto on prisons. With Wilberforce, the philanthropist, John Wesley was in keenest sympathy, and to him he wrote his last letter, in which he designates the African slave trade as "that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature."

The genial old man was ever a lover of children. At Oldham he found "a whole street lined with them—a troop of boys and girls who closed him in, and would not let him go until he had shaken each of them by the hand." In his eighty-eighth year he preached a special sermon to children in words of not more than two syllables. His appearance in extreme old age is described as a pattern of neatness and simplicity, his hair as white as snow, and his smile one of peculiar benignity.

Feeling that he must soon lay down his work he framed, in 1784, the Deed of Declaration,

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whereby a hundred of his preachers were constituted the Legal Conference after his death. In their name were held all the chapels and parsonages and other property of the Wesleyan Connection. He also set apart Dr. Coke as superintendent or bishop of the American Methodist Church, as elsewhere described.

In his eighty-fifth year the grand old man acknowledges that he is not so agile as formerly, that he has occasional twinges of rheumatism, and suffers slight dimness of sight, his other senses remaining unimpaired. "However, blessed be God," he says, "I do not slack from my labor, and can preach and write still." From being one of the worst hated he became one of the best beloved men in the kingdom. At Cork, where he was once mobbed and burned in effigy, he was met by a cortége of mounted horsemen. At Falmouth, where he had been taken prisoner by an immense mob "roaring like lions," high and low now lined the street from one end of the town to the other, "out of love and kindness, gaping and staring as if the king were going by." At Burslem the people gathered so early in the morning that he began to preach at half past four. At Newgate he preached to forty-seven men under sentence of death, "the clink of whose chains was very awful." But most of them sobbed with broken

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hearts while he proclaimed, “There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.”

On his last birthday he writes that although his strength had forsaken him so that he had to be helped into the pulpit, and his eyes had become dim, yet he felt no pain.

In 1790, for the last time, John Wesley presided at his Conference at Bristol, being then in his eighty-eighth year. His response to the salutations of the multitudes who gathered around him as he passed was that of St. John the Divine, “Little children, love one another.” He now ceased recording his receipts and expenditures in his account book. His last entry is a remarkable one: “For upward of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly; I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can; that is, all I have.” It is scarcely legible, and the error in the number of years given shows the failure of his faculties.

When his income was but thirty pounds a year he confined his expenses to twenty-eight pounds and gave away two. When it reached one hundred and twenty, which seems to have been its largest amount, he still lived on his old allowance and gave away ninety-two pounds. Besides this he earned a large amount by his numerous writings. This was generously em-

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ployed in carrying on his great work. It is estimated that he gave away over thirty thousand pounds which he had earned with his pen.

His was a serene and sunny old age which mellowed as the years passed by. His early asceticism had long disappeared. One of his pious helpers complained that by Wesley's witty proverbs he was tempted to levity. To a blustering fellow who attempted to throw him down, saying, "Sir, I never make way for a fool," Wesley replied, "I always do," and politely stepped aside. But, for the most part, he endured persecution and buffeting with the meekness of his Master, and when smitten on one cheek he literally turned the other also.

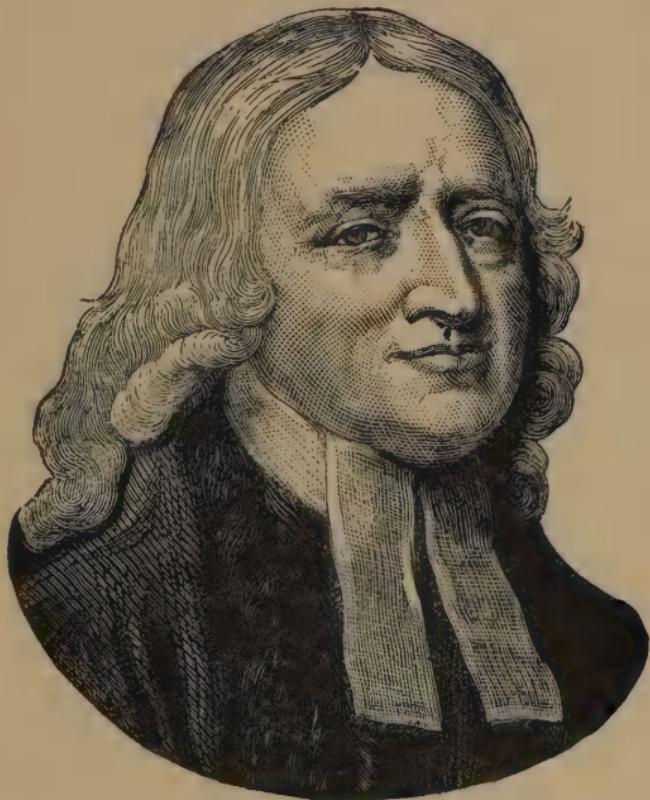
Notwithstanding his extreme age, there seemed no limit to his energy. After performing a long service of three hours, praying, preaching, and administering the sacrament, he preached again in the open air. The next day he preached twice in different towns, and in the evening to a crowd in the chapel, and to a multitude without, who could hear through the open windows. And so on, day after day, preaching twice or thrice daily, beginning at five o'clock in the morning.

In his last letter to America he writes, with a sense of the essential unity of Methodism the wide world over, "Lose no opportunity of de-

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claring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue."

On February 22, 1791, he preached his



WESLEY IN HIS OLD AGE.

last sermon in City Road Chapel, and the following day his last sermon on earth. "On that day," says Dr. Abel Stevens, "fell from his dying grasp a trumpet of the truth which had

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sounded the everlasting Gospel oftener, and more effectually, than that of any other man for seventeen hundred years. Whitefield preached eighteen thousand sermons, more than ten a week for his thirty-four years of ministerial life. Wesley preached forty-two thousand four hundred after his return from Georgia, more than fifteen a week."

The following Sunday he quoted with cheerfulness his brother's hymn :

"Till glad I lay this body down,  
Thy servant, Lord, attend ;  
And, O, my life of mercy crown  
With a triumphant end!"

and repeated over and over again the lines :

"I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me."

Two days later he sang with fervor :

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures."

Twice he repeated the words, "The best of all is, God is with us;" and with the words, "Farewell! farewell!" upon his lips, his spirit passed into the skies. In accordance with his will, six poor men bore him to his grave in the rear of

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City Road Chapel. "He directed that there should be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those who loved him, and were following him to heaven." So great was the multitude that thronged to pay a last tribute of love that it was deemed best to bury him before six in the morning. Nevertheless, a great multitude were present, and their tears and sobs attested the depths of their affection.

It has been well said "that few men could have endured to travel so much as he did, without either preaching, writing, or reading; that few could have endured to preach as often as he did, supposing they had neither traveled nor written books; and that very few men could have written and published so many books as he did, though they had always avoided both preaching and traveling."

Charles Wesley, the poet of Methodism, was almost as great a marvel as his venerable brother. Up to his eightieth year he maintained his vigor of body and mind. His last hymn, dictated to his wife on his deathbed, was the sweet, sad note of the dying swan about to set sail on a sea of glory:

"In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
Jesus, my only hope thou art,

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

Strength of my failing flesh and heart :  
O could I catch one smile from thee,  
And drop into eternity ! ”

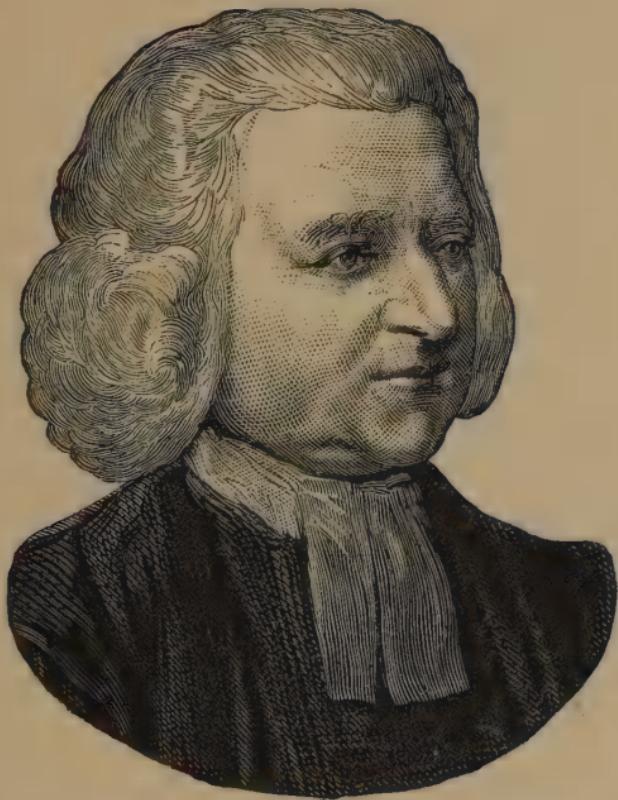
He was, for the volume and excellence of his verse, the greatest hymnist the world has ever seen. He composed his immortal songs chiefly on horseback as he rode “from town to town, from mob to mob,” writing them in pencil in shorthand characters on a card. Often when he came to his lodgings he would call out for pen and ink, and complete the hymn while the inspiration was upon him.

Some of his finest lyrics were composed during his travels at the time when the early Methodists were daily assaulted, maltreated, and persecuted. He often recited and sometimes sang them among the raging mobs. Four of them were written “to be sung in a tumult,” and one was a “prayer for the first martyr.” It was soon to be found appropriate. Many others were inspired by the triumphant deaths of these holy confessors of the faith.

Over six hundred of his hymns have been collected in the Wesleyan hymn book. About forty-six hundred in all have been printed, but about two thousand still remain in manuscript. Many of these, by their spiritual exaltation and poetic merit, have won their way into the hymnaries of nearly all the Christian Churches.

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

They have inspired the faith and voiced the feelings of unnumbered millions, and have been lisped by the pallid lips of the dying as, shout-



CHARLES WESLEY,  
“THE SWEET SINGER OF METHODISM.”

ing their triumphant songs, they have “swept through the gates” of the celestial city.

A great hymn is one of God’s best gifts to his Church. When the voice that first sang it is silent forever the hymn will go singing

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

through the ages in many lands and many tongues. Every great revival has been largely dependent on the help of sacred song. The doctrines of the Reformation in Germany flew abroad on the wings of the hymns and carols of Martin Luther. The Wesleyan revival found its most potent ally in the immortal hymns of Charles Wesley.

"To the sweet singer of Methodism," says Dr. W. F. Tillett, "our Church owes more than to any other man save his brother John. The doctrines of early Methodism were not only preached into the ears, but they were sung into the minds and hearts of the people in and through the matchless hymns of this seraphic poet of the Church."

"Let me write the songs of a people," said one, "and I care not who may write their laws: I will govern them." "Let me write the hymns of a church," said another, "and I care not who may write her creeds and her ponderous volumes of theology: I will determine the faith of the people."

So these hymns of Charles Wesley have molded the thought and life of Methodism beyond any other influence. "His songs have helped more souls to happiness, to holiness and heaven than those of any other bard since the days of the Psalmist of Israel."

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

Much as his hymns are appreciated by Methodists, some of the most glowing criticisms and eulogies of his verse have come from other than Methodist writers. "Christian experience," says James Montgomery, "from the depths of affection, through all gradations of doubt, fear, desire, faith, hope, and expectation, to the transports of perfect love in the very beams of the beatific vision, furnishes him with everlasting and inexhaustible themes, celebrated with an affluence of diction and a splendor of coloring rarely surpassed."

Henry Ward Beecher said: "I would rather have written that hymn of Wesley's, 'Jesus, Lover of my soul,' than have the fame of all the kings that ever sat on the earth. It is more glorious. It has more power. I would rather be the author of that hymn than hold the wealth of the richest man in New York. He will die. He will pass after a little while out of men's thoughts. But that hymn will go on singing until the last trump brings forth the angel band; and then, I think, it will mount up on some lip to the throne of God." It is the hymn probably more used than any other in the English language.

Between his conversion and death Charles Wesley wrote nearly seven thousand hymns, filling thirteen octavo volumes of five hundred

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

pages each; exceeding all the poetry of Watts, Cowper, and Pope put together. He wrote on an average nearly three hymns a week for fifty years. And the number of his hymns is only equaled by their range and variety, spanning as they do the sublime empyrean from the first cry of a newborn babe to the last shout of a dying spirit. His memory will live immortal in his immortal verse till time shall be no more. To quote from the inscription on his tomb:

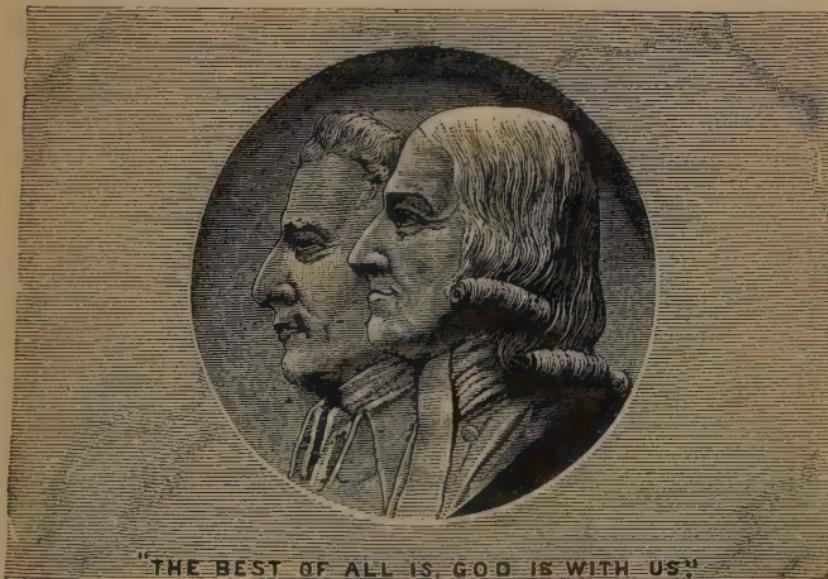
“Posterity shall hear and babes rehearse  
The healing virtues of a Saviour’s name;  
Yes, babes unborn shall sing in Wesley’s verse,  
And still reiterate the pleasing theme.”

He was the laureate of the affections, and had a hymn for almost every event in life. At the time of his marriage to Miss Sarah Gwynne, they sang hymns of solemn joy composed by himself for the occasion; and just after the ceremony he took his lovely young bride behind him on horseback, and they sang other hymns with pious joy as they rode thus along the way. His married life was as full of happiness as his brother John’s was of domestic misery.

Two of Charles Wesley’s sons became distinguished musicians. A great-grandson, a venerable gentleman of silvery hair and exquisite musical taste, is the organist of City Road Chapel, London.

## JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY

It is fitting that in Westminster Abbey, that "temple of silence and reconciliation," that mausoleum of England's mighty dead, there should be a memorial of the two great men who did so much to mold the higher life of the nation. The beautiful mural monument of



WESLEY MEMORIAL TABLET, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

John and Charles Wesley, which is shown in our cuts, is one of the first which Methodist tourists from all parts of the world visit in the venerable abbey. It was unveiled by Dean Stanley on March 30, 1876, in the presence of a large company of invited guests—ministers, laymen, and ladies. The company assembled

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first in the chapter-house, in which the first English Parliament was held.

Dean Stanley, in unveiling the monument, expressed the obligation which the Church of England, which England itself, and which the Church of Christ owed to the labors of John and Charles Wesley.

Immediately beneath the sculptured picture of the scene in the churchyard is John Wesley's great philanthropic declaration :

“I LOOK UPON ALL THE WORLD AS MY PARISH.”

And under this, on the sloping line at the bottom, is graven Charles Wesley's exultant exclamation :

“GOD BURIES HIS WORKMAN, BUT CARRIES ON  
HIS WORK.”

Dr. Daniels eloquently remarks: “It is but just that some memorial of that royal man should be set up among the tombs of England's princes, bishops, heroes, and statesmen. Other men have been kings by the accident of birth, of royal blood: John Wesley reigned by virtue of the divine anointing. Other bishops have worn the miter and carried the keys through the devious workings of State Church prefer-

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ment: John Wesley was a bishop by the grace of God. Other heroes have earned their honors by ravaging sea and land to kill, burn, and destroy: Wesley, with equal courage and equal



WESLEY MEMORIAL TABLET, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

skill, achieved his fame not by killing, but by saving men."

V

**John Nelson, the Yorkshire Mason**

“I, JOHN NELSON, was born in the parish of Birstal, in the West Riding of the County of York, in October, 1707, and brought up a mason, as was my father before me.” Thus begins one of the most remarkable books in the language. In simple, homely Saxon words the author tells the story of his life. We get in his pages a vivid picture of England a hundred and fifty years ago—of its spiritual destitution, and of the great Wesleyan revival that swept over it, and gave it a grand moral impulse, which is felt throughout the world.

John Nelson’s life was one of holy zeal and grandest heroism. Like many a man through whom God has blessed the world, he was made to pass through intense religious experience, doubtless that he might better counsel and comfort those who were in spiritual distress. We shall tell the story as much as possible in his own words. While yet a boy he was “horribly terrified with the thoughts of death and judgment.” As the awful imagery of the Apocalypse was presented to his mind the word came with

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such power that he “fell with his face on the floor, and wept till the place was as wet where he lay as if water had been poured thereon.” Still, he had no saving acquaintance with the truth till after his marriage and settlement in life. But all the while his heart cried out for the living God. The hand of God was heavy upon him, and often forty times a day he prayed for pardon. His fellow-workmen persecuted him because he would not drink with them, till he fought with several of them; then they let him alone. He wandered from one part of the kingdom to another, seeking rest and finding none.

In his thirtieth year he writes: “O that I had been a horse or a sheep! Rather than live thirty years more as I have I would choose strangling. O that I had never been born!” An awful sense of the reality of the unseen world and of the impending terrors of the judgment day weighed like an intolerable load upon him. He went from church to church—to St. Paul’s, to the Dissenters, the Quakers, the Roman Catholics, to “all but the Jews”—to try to save his soul. Still the burden of conscious guilt was unremoved. He realized in all its bitterness that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.”

A score of times he stood amid the surging, grimy throng that gathered around Whitefield

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as he preached on Moorfields; but though he loved the man and was ready to fight for him, he found no peace from hearing him. "The pains of hell gat hold upon him." Sleep departed from his eyes, and when he fell into slumber he dreamed that he was engaged in mortal combat with Satan, and awoke convulsed with horror and affright.

At last John Wesley preached at Moorfields. When he spoke he made the heart of Nelson beat "like the pendulum of a clock." Conviction deepened. His friends would have knocked Mr. Wesley's brains out, for he would be the ruin, they said, of many families if he were allowed to live and go on as he did. For weeks Nelson wrestled with God in agony of soul. At last he vowed that he would neither eat nor drink till he found forgiveness. He prayed till he could pray no more. He got up and walked to and fro, and prayed again, the tears falling from his eyes like great drops of rain. A third time he fell upon his knees, but "was as dumb as a beast before God." At length, in an agony, he cried out, "Lord, thy will be done; damn or save." That moment was Jesus Christ evidently set before him as crucified for his sins. His heart at once was set at liberty, and he began to sing, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and

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thou comfortest me." Through such spiritual travail was this valiant soul born into the kingdom of God.

That night he was driven from his lodgings on account of his much praying and ado about religion. But as he was leaving the house conviction seized his hosts, and they were both, man and wife, soon made partakers of the same grace.

Nelson was ordered to oversee some work on the following Sunday. He declined and was threatened with dismissal from his employment.

"I would rather see my wife and children beg their way barefoot to heaven," he replied, "than ride in a coach to hell. I will run the risk of wanting bread here rather than the hazard of wanting water hereafter." His master swore that he was as mad as Whitefield; that Wesley had made a fool of him. But instead of being dismissed he was raised higher in his master's regard, nor were any men set to work on the Sunday.

In all this time he had never spoken to Mr. Wesley, nor conversed with any experienced person about religion. He longed to find some one to talk with; but, he pathetically says, he sought in vain, for he could find none. Nevertheless, he was taught of God, and had sweet fellowship with him in almost constant prayer and in the study of his Holy Word.

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Such a desire for the salvation of souls now possessed him that he hired one of his fellow-workmen to hear Mr. Wesley preach, which led to his conversion and that of his wife.

But Nelson was permitted to be sorely buffeted by Satan; grievous temptations assailed his soul. God's hand, too, was laid heavily upon him. An accumulation of calamities, almost like the afflictions of Job, overtook him. A single letter informed him that his almost idolized daughter was dead, that his son's life was despaired of, that his wife had fallen from a horse and was lamed, that his father-in-law was dead, and his mother sick. But, like Job, he exclaimed, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

He set out on his eventful journey to Yorkshire, but he "had no more thought of preaching than of eating fire." His friends were astonished at the story of his conversion. They said they had never heard of such a thing in their lives. His mother said his head was turned. "Yes," he replied, "and I thank God my heart also." His neighbors upbraided and mocked him. His wife refused to live with him; but by his faith and love he brought her to a knowledge of the Saviour.

He forthwith began exhorting his neighbors to flee from the wrath to come. Like Andrew, he first brought his own brother to Jesus, and in

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a few days six of his neighbors also. There was a spiritual famine in the land, and he had found the bread of life. He could not, therefore, but cry aloud to those who were perishing of soul hunger. Soon his aged mother, another brother, and most of his kindred were brought to God ; and for several weeks, six or seven persons every week were converted through his exhortations.

He was urged to preach, but he exclaimed, “Lord, thou knowest I had rather be hanged on that tree than go to preach ;” and, Jonah-like, he fled from the call of God. A great congregation was gathered in the fields and begged him to preach. He fell flat on his face and lay an hour on the grass, tasting, he believed, the cup of the lost. “Let me die ! let me die !” he exclaimed, in bitterness of soul, shrinking from the burden of this cross. But in his anguish the Sun of righteousness shone upon him, and he exclaimed, “Lord, I am ready to go to hell and preach to devils if thou requirest it !” That night two men were converted under his burning words, which he took as the seal of the call of God to preach the Gospel ; but in his mental strait he would have given ten pounds, he said, for an hour’s conversation with Mr. Wesley.

Some of his more cautious friends now urged him to wait a month till he knew more of his

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own heart. But the word of God was a fire in his bones, and he replied, "I will if you can persuade the devil to be still for a month from going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Oftentimes when he preached at night, after his day's work, the people, hungering for the bread of life, refused to go away, waiting like beggars that wanted a morsel of food.

Soon he began his ranging through the kingdom, proclaiming the word of life. As he entered Leeds he was warned, "If you preach there you need not expect to come out again alive, for there is a company of men that swear they will kill you."

"All the men in the town cannot kill me," answered the dauntless soul, "till I have done my Father's work."

At Manchester some one threw a stone which cut him in the head, but as his audience saw the blood running down his face they kept quiet till he had done preaching. With a boldness not less than Luther's on his way to the Diet of Worms, the sturdy Yorkshireman, in spite of the threat that he would be mobbed and killed if he tried to preach in a schoolhouse that had been offered at Grimsby, exclaimed, "By the grace of God I will preach if there were as many devils in it as there are tiles on it."

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Nelson's most bitter opposition came from dissolute clergymen of the Established Church. In Derbyshire a drunken parson with a lot of lead miners began to halloo and shout as if they were hunting with a pack of hounds; but the power of the truth so affected the rude miners that they became the champions of the man they came to persecute. Thus God put a bridle in the mouths of howling mobs who came not merely to mock, but to kill, and many of them remained to pray.

Nelson was summoned by Mr. Wesley to London. But he had worn out his clothes in the cause of God, and had none fit to travel in until some tradesmen, unsolicited, sent him cloth for a suit. Unable to hire a horse he set out on foot for London, preaching as he went. The aristocratic gownsmen and embryo parsons of Oxford vied in ruffianism with the rude miners of Derbyshire. "I never heard a soldier or sailor," says Nelson, "swear worse than they did."

On his way to Cornwall with a fellow-evangelist they had but one horse between them, so they rode by turns. Like the apostle Paul, Nelson labored with his hands at his trade, that he might not be burdensome to those to whom he preached. Nevertheless he was sometimes in want of bread, and, like his Master, had not where to lay his head. At St. Ives he and Mr.

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Wesley for some time slept every night on the floor—the learned Oxford Fellow and the Yorkshire mason side by side.

“Mr. Wesley,” writes Nelson, “had my great coat for a pillow, and I had Burkitt’s Notes on the New Testament for mine. After being here three weeks, one morning, about three o’clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, saying, ‘Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer. I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side.’ We usually preached on the commons,” he adds, “and it was but seldom anyone asked us to eat or drink.”

One day, after preaching, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the wayside berries, saying, “Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there is plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst I ever saw for getting food. . . . I had thought of begging a crust of the woman where I met the people at Morva,” he added, “but forgot it till I had got some distance from the house.” By such unostentatious heroism were the foundations of Methodism laid in Great Britain by these apostolic laborers.

On Nelson’s return from Yorkshire he found his wife ill through maltreatment by a mob while she was bravely defending a preacher whom they were assaulting. “You are Nelson’s wife, and

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here you shall die," swore the savages, and did their best to fulfill their threat.

"In Leeds," Nelson naïvely remarks, "the mob did not meddle with me, only some boys threw about a peck of turnips at me." At Nottingham a sergeant who came to assault him publicly begged his pardon, and went away weeping.

At Grimsby the church parson rallied a drunken mob and smashed the windows and furniture of the house where he lodged with paving stones. A ringleader, after beating his drum three quarters of an hour, began to listen, and then to weep, and at last to pray. "So we had great peace in our shattered house that night," says Nelson, "and God's presence among us."

At length the drink-loving parsons and the alehouse keepers—worthy allies!—resolved that Nelson must be impressed into the army, as the only way to stop his interference with their pleasure or profits. Still he durst not keep silent, but continued hewing stone all day and preaching every night. "I am not my own, but the Lord's," he said; "he that lays hands on me will burn his own fingers."

By a monstrous perversion of justice he was arrested as a vagrant; £500 bail was refused; and the commissioners of the peace, among

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whom was the parson, impressed him as a soldier, under the penalty of death if he refused. Still his soul was kept in perfect peace, and he prayed God to forgive them, for they knew not what they did.

With other prisoners condemned for vagrancy and theft Nelson was marched off to York, he being singled out for special severity. At Bradford he was lodged in a noisome dungeon, reeking with filth, without even a stone to sit on, and with only a little foul straw for a bed—a type of too many of England's prisons a hundred years ago. But his soul was so filled with the love of God that the felon's cell was to him a paradise. He realized that

“Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.”

Some friends brought him meat and drink, which they put through the small opening in the door, and,

“Like Paul and Silas in the prison,  
They sang the praise of Christ arisen.”

“I wished that my enemies,” wrote Nelson, “were as happy in their houses as I was in the dungeon.”

At four o'clock in the morning his noble wife visited his cell and said, although she then most required a husband's care, “Be not concerned

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about me and the children. He that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us;" and the brave-souled husband answered, "I cannot fear either man or devil so long as I find the love of God as I do now."

"Now, Nelson, where is thy God?" jeered a woman, as the prisoners stood, like a gang of slaves, for hours in the streets of Leeds. He referred her to Micah vii, 8-10: "Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall rise."

Large bail was offered for his release, but was refused. "I am too notorious a criminal," he somewhat bitterly remarks, "to be allowed such favors; for Christianity is a crime which the world will never forgive." And this persecution took place in Christian England little more than a hundred years ago!

But he was not without consolation. "I find the time has not yet come," he says, "for me to be hated of all men for Christ's sake." At night a hundred of his friends visited him in the jail. They sang a hymn and prayed together, and he exhorted them through the opening in his cell door.

When he was brought before the military officers he boldly reproved them for the sin of swearing. "You must not preach here," he was told; but he answered, "There is but one way to prevent it—that is, to swear no more in

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my hearing." All York came forth to see him led under guard through the streets, as if he "had been one that had laid waste the nation;" but he passed through the city as if there had been none in but God and himself.

He refused to take the King's money. "I cannot bow my knee to pray for a man and then get up and kill him," he said. Nevertheless, he was girded with the weapons of war; but he bore them as a cross, and would not defile his conscience by using them. But if he was bound the word of God was not bound; for if any blasphemed he "reproved them, whether rich or poor."

At the instigation of some clergymen he was forbidden to preach under the penalty of being severely flogged; but, Peterlike, he replied, "It is better to obey God than man." "I will have no preaching nor praying in the regiment," swore the officer. "Then," said Nelson, "You should have no swearing nor cursing either." He was, however, carried off to prison; yet God enabled him to rest as well on the bare boards, he declares, as if it had been on a bed of down. "For what were you imprisoned?" demanded the major. "For warning people to flee from the wrath to come," said the intrepid preacher; "and I shall do so again unless you cut my tongue out."

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The London Methodists having hired a substitute to serve in his place, through the influence of the Wesleys and the Countess of Huntingdon with the Earl of Stair the discharge of this resolute noncombatant was procured. When he left the regiment several of his fellow-soldiers wept and desired him to pray for them.

He was now free to indulge his hallowed passion—to preach the Gospel without hindrance. For the most part the people heard him gladly; yet in many places lewd fellows of the baser sort assailed him with sticks, stones, and filth. Once a halter was put around his neck to drag him to the river to drown him. At Ackham, in Yorkshire, he was knocked down eight times in succession by a drunken mob led by some “young gentlemen.” He was dragged over the stones by the hair of the head, kicked, beaten, and trampled on, “to tread the Holy Spirit out of him,” as the murderous wretches blasphemously declared. “We cannot kill him,” they said; “if a cat has nine lives he has nine score.” “This,” says Nelson, “was on Easter Sunday”—a strange commemoration of the day.” They swore they would serve Mr. Wesley the same way. “Then we shall be rid of the Methodists forever,” they said; “for none will dare to come if they two be killed.” The next morning this Ajax of Methodism set out to meet Mr.

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Wesley, and “was enabled to ride forty miles that day.”

But these things were light afflictions; for the Gospel had free course, and multitudes were converted to God.

Here ends the remarkable journal of John Nelson. For five-and-twenty years longer he continued to range through the kingdom as one of Mr. Wesley’s regular helpers, a burning and a shining light to all, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. He finished his course with joy in the sixty-seventh year of his age, 1774.

We shall obtrude no comments of our own upon the lesson of this noble life. No braver soul ever went to the martyr’s stake, or won the martyr’s starry and unwithering crown. He and such as he, by their consecrated toils, their suffering, and their undying zeal, laid the foundations of that goodly structure of Methodism that now rises fair throughout the land they loved so well, and throughout the world. Their memory is the imperishable heritage of the Church universal. It shall be to all time, and in all lands, a glorious example of valiant living and holy dying, a rebuke to indolence or self-seeking, and an inspiration to zeal and energy in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

## SILAS TOLD, THE PRISONERS' FRIEND

### VI

#### *Silas Told, the Prisoners' Friend*

THE life of Silas Told was one of extraordinary vicissitudes. He has left the record of his remarkable adventures written with a vividness of detail that Defoe might have envied. He was born in the ancient seaport of Bristol in the year 1711. Both his father and his grandfather were eminent physicians, and landed gentlemen; but through misfortune and ill-advised speculation the family, on the father's death, were reduced almost to poverty. Silas received a meager education at a charity hospital endowed by a wealthy East India merchant. Here, even in boyhood, he was the subject of deep convictions of sin and of subsequent religious enjoyment. While swimming with some school companions he was nearly drowned, and with difficulty was brought back to life, to pass through tribulations which "seemed like a sea of blood and fire."

In his fourteenth year he was apprenticed to a West India sea captain. In the hard school of the ship's forecastle he received such barbarous treatment that he thought he should have

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broken his heart with grief. But the orphan cabin boy, alone in the wide world, had no friend to whom he could apply for redress. On the Spanish Main the crew were several weeks on the short allowance of a single biscuit and half a pint of foul water per day. At Kingston, Jamaica, they were overtaken by a hurricane, and of seventy-six sail in the harbor only one escaped destruction.

For miles along the shore the drowned seamen were cast up by the waves and devoured by the vultures. The poor lad was abandoned, ill of fever, in the port of Kingston, without money or friends, and lay down to die. Here he "pondered much upon Job's case, considering his own condition similar to his." Rescued from death by a London captain, he returned to England and was soon shipped with a Guinea slaver, bound for the coast of Africa and the West Indies. A greater villain than his new master, he writes, he firmly believed never existed. From the Negro savages he received more kindness than from his own countrymen. The appalling cruelties of that floating hell, a slave ship, were never more vividly described. Battened down under the hatches half the human cargo were suffocated in a single night. Driven to frenzy by outrage and wrong the slaves rose in mutiny. Overpowered by their

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tyrants many plunged overboard and were drowned. Cruelty and murder rioted unrestrained. "The mariners," says Told, "seemed greedy of eternal death and damnation." The unhappy boy amid these vile companionships, plunged recklessly into sin; yet, through the mercy of God, his terrified conscience was never without fear of death and the judgment.

The outrages and wrongs wreaked upon the hapless slaves in Jamaica were too revolting to be described. By an awful and inevitable retribution such wickedness degraded masters as well as slaves. In his many sojourns on the island Told never met a single person having the fear of God, or even the form of godliness.

With a sailorlike vein of superstition he tells us that on the home voyage, the captain being sick, a hideous devilfish followed the ship for eighteen hundred miles, and on the captain's death disappeared and was seen no more.

During a later voyage the vessel in which Told sailed was captured by Spanish pirates, and the crew were informed that "every one of them should be hanged, and that without ceremony." The prize, with its crew, made its escape, however, but only to be wrecked upon a rocky shore. The crew were rescued by a New England vessel, but were again wrecked on

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Martha's Vineyard. Reaching the mainland they set out for Boston, but were arrested for traveling on Sunday. In Boston, "a commodious and beautiful city," Told remained four months, and—marked contrast to Jamaica—never heard an oath uttered, nor saw any Sabbath-breaking, nor found an individual guilty of extortion. "Would to God," he exclaims, "that I could say this of the inhabitants of old England!"

After several other voyages, in one of which, through stress of weather, the ship's company could dress no food nor change their wet clothing for six weeks, the whole crew were pressed for the royal navy. The commander of the ship to which Told was assigned, in striking exception to many of his class of that age, was a devout Christian, and used constantly to visit the ship's invalids and pray at their bedside.

The story of Told's short sailor courtship and marriage is recorded in four lines. He now joined the royal fleet of twenty-four ships of the line, which soon sailed for Lisbon to protect the Brazil fleet from the Spaniards. They lay at anchor in the Tagus ten months and then returned to Chatham, which movement occupied another month. Those were the leisurely times before the days of steam and telegraphy. Told

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was now paid off, and disgusted with the hardships and wickedness of a life before the mast, he never went to sea again.

“ Being now married, and desirous of living a regular life,” as he says, “ he habituated himself to churchgoing;” but finding churchmen living as others he hastily concluded that religion was a mere sham. He obtained the position of a schoolmaster on the magnificent salary of £14 a year. The curate of the parish frequently decoyed Told to his lodgings to join him in smoking, drinking, and singing songs, so that often his guest could scarcely find his way home. As the sailor once quoted a text of scripture the parson exclaimed, “ Told, are you such a blockhead as to believe that stuff ? It is nothing but a pack of lies.” Such clerical influence and example certainly did not deepen his conviction of the reality of religion.

He shortly after found employment with a builder in London. One day a young bricklayer asked him some questions on business. Told answered him roughly, which treatment the young man received with much meekness. “ This,” said Told, “ struck me with surprise.” That young man, by his meek silence, had preached an eloquent sermon which led to his companion’s conversion, and through that to the conversion of multitudes of others.

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His new acquaintance introduced him among "the people called Methodists." Told tried to stifle his convictions by cursing and swearing at his friend who had been largely the cause of them; but the young man bore it all with unwearyed patience, without returning one evil look or word. "His countenance," says Told, "appeared full of holy grief, which greatly condemned me."

Told was at length induced to go to early Methodist service at "The Foundry." He found it a ruinous old place which the government had used for casting cannon. It had been abandoned, and was much dilapidated. Above the smoke-begrimed rafters was seen the tile roof covering. A few rough deal boards were put together to form a temporary pulpit. Such was the rude cradle of that wondrous child of Providence called Methodism.

Exactly at five o'clock a whisper ran through the large congregation that had assembled, "Here he comes! Here he comes!" Told expected to see some farmer's son, who, not able to support himself, was making a penny in this low manner. Instead of this he beheld a learned clergyman of the Established Church arrayed in gown and bands. The singing was much enjoyed, but the extempore prayer savored rather of Dissent for Told's sturdy Churchmanship.

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Wesley's text was, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you." The words sank into the heart of the long storm-tossed sailor, weary with bearing its load of sorrow and sin. With a characteristic, generous impulse, he exclaimed, "As long as I live I will never leave this man."

He soon met persecution. "What, Told, are you a Whitefieldite?" jeered his boon companions. "As sure as you are born, if you follow them you are damned," admonished these zealous enemies of Methodism. His wife, also, although, he says, "a worthy, honest woman," swore at him and said: "I hope you have not been among the Methodists. I'll sacrifice my soul rather than you shall go among those miscreants." Thus was the despised sect everywhere spoken against. His firmness and affection, however, overcame her opposition.

Told was soon requested by Mr. Wesley to undertake the teaching of the charity children at the Foundry school, at the salary of ten shillings a week. At this work he continued for seven years, having the children under his care from five in the morning till five in the evening, both winter and summer. During this time he educated two hundred and seventy-five boys, "most of them fit for any trade." Thus early did Methodism grapple with the social problem

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of the education of the ignorant masses of the population.

One morning, as Told and his scholars attended the five o'clock sermon, Mr. Wesley preached from the words, "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." The generous-hearted sailor was conscience stricken at his neglect of what was now revealed as a manifest duty, and was "filled with horror of mind beyond expression." Learning that ten malefactors were lying at Newgate under sentence of death, he committed his school without an hour's delay to the care of an usher, and hastened to the prison.

Silas Told had at length found his vocation. For five and thirty years he continued to burrow in the dungeons of London and the neighboring towns—often literally to burrow, for many of them were underground—carrying the light and liberty of the Gospel to their dark cells, and to the still darker hearts of their inmates. The unvarnished story of his experiences abounds in incidents of the most thrilling, and often harrowing, interest.

He was often locked up with the felons all night before their execution. He sat beside them as they rode to the gallows in the death cart with the halter on their necks, sharing with them the jibes and jeers, and sometimes the mis-

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siles, of the mob who gloated over their misery. He prayed with them and exhorted and comforted them as they stood on the brink of eternity. He begged or purchased their bodies for burial, and often succored their wretched and suffering families. He led many to repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Hardened criminals broke down under his loving exhortations; and turnkeys, sheriffs, and hangmen wept as they listened to his prayers. Friendless and degraded outcasts clung to him for sympathy and counsel, and through the manifestation of human love and pity caught a glimpse of the infinite love and pity of Him who died as a malefactor to save the malefactors.

Through his influence the felon's cell became to many the gate of heaven. The ribald oaths and obscene riots of the British jails—then the vilest in Europe, save those of the Inquisition—often gave place to the singing of Christian hymns and the voice of prayer and praise. At one time Told had a Methodist society of thirty members, and at another of thirty-six members, among the poor debtors of Newgate. Yet was he “very cautious of daubing them with untempered mortar,” but sought to bring about their real and permanent conversion.

The chief opposition to this Christlike work came from the “ordinaries,” or chaplains,

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whose hireling and heartless service was put to shame by the intense and loving zeal of this voluntary evangelist. But he burst through every obstacle, and, "in the name of God, would take no denial."

The appalling condition of that prison world with which he became so familiar makes one recoil with horror. In many of the prisons there was little or no classification of age or sex, and hardened felons became the teachers in crime of youthful offenders against cruelly unjust laws. The extortion and rapacity and inhumanity of jailers and turnkeys seem to us almost incredible. The dungeons reeked with squalor and wretchedness and filth. Honest debtors were confined, sometimes for years, in odious cells; and, as a favor, were permitted, caged like wild beasts, to solicit the precarious charity of passers-by. Men and women were dragged on hurdles to Tyburn and hanged by the score for forgery, for larceny, for petty theft. Worst of all, Told cites certain instances which demonstrate, by the subsequent discovery of the real criminal, that sometimes innocent persons had fallen victims to this sanguinary code.

One young woman was thus judicially done to death, although even the sheriff was convinced of her innocence. A ribald mob clam-

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ored for her blood. Her religious resignation was jibed at as hardness of heart, and so great was the popular fury that Told, riding with her to the gallows, was in imminent peril of assault. Her innocence was afterward completely established.

Told records the tragic circumstances of a poor man who was hanged for stealing sixpence to buy bread for his starving wife and babes. Their parting in the prison was a harrowing scene. Told collected from a poor Methodist congregation a sum of money for the destitute widow, and successfully overcame the official brutality of the poorhouse guardians so as to obtain for her parish relief.

On another occasion the multitude, when exhorted by Told to pray for the passing soul, answered with a shout of execration and a shower of stones that endangered the life of the culprit before the law could do its work. "Nothing could have equaled them," says Told, "but the spirits let loose from the infernal pit." Yet all this did not draw off the mind of the dying woman from resting in that supreme hour on the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes a rescue of the culprit was attempted by his friends. A volley of stones would assail the sheriff's *posse*, and a rush would be made toward the gallows. Then the ghastly

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proceedings would be hurried through with the most indecent dispatch and confusion.

Yet the frequency of this awful spectacle did not diminish crime. On the contrary it flourished, seemingly unrestrained, beneath the very gallows. Familiarity with scenes of violence created a recklessness of human life and propensity to bloodshed. Often the confederates of the felon surrounded the gibbet and encouraged the partner of their guilt. Even the sheriff's officers sometimes, by their crimes, incurred the penalty they assisted to inflict. We may well rejoice that, through the ameliorating influence of a revived Christianity on the penal discipline and social life of Christendom, such scenes of horror are now scarcely conceivable.

Sometimes the faithful warning and most solemn adjuration of this hero-heart, burning with such passionate zeal to "pluck poor souls out of the fire," though he probed the guilty conscience to the quick, failed to move men to repentance, even on the awful brink of perdition; but many, without doubt, found, through temporal death, eternal life.

Sometimes Told had the great joy of conveying a reprieve to the condemned. After a convivial election dinner three young sprigs of nobility, half crazed with drink, diverted themselves by playing highwaymen and robbing a

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farmer. One of them, an officer on one of the king's ships, was betrothed to Lady Betty Hamilton, the daughter of an ancient ducal house. The lady importuned the king upon her knees for the life of her lover. "Madame," said his majesty, "there is no end to your importunity. I will spare his life upon condition that he be not acquainted therewith till he arrives at the place of execution." The condemned man fainted with joy when the reprieve was communicated to him; "but when I saw him put into a coach," says Told, "and perceived that Lady Betty Hamilton was seated therein, in order to receive him, my fear was at an end."

Many were the checkered scenes in which this humble hero bore a prominent part. He was not only a remarkable trophy of divine grace, but an example of the power of Methodism to use lowly and unlettered men in evangelistic and philanthropic work.

What was the inspiration of this unwearying zeal? It was the entire consecration of an earnest soul to the service of its divine Master. At a time when Told rose daily at four o'clock, attended morning service at five, and toiled every spare hour for the prisoner and the outcast, he was agonizing in spirit over the remains of the carnal mind. Like the Psalmist,

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he even forgot to eat bread by reason of his sin. Often he wandered in the fields till near midnight, "roaring for very disquietude of soul." If he might, he says, he would have chosen "strangling rather than life."

At length deliverance came. The heavens seemed visibly to open before him, and Jesus stood stretching forth his bleeding palms in the benediction of full salvation. Tears gushed from the eyes of the impassioned suppliant, and in ecstasy he exclaimed, "Lord, it is enough!"

Thus was he anointed to preach good tidings to the prisoners, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to them that were bound. Like the Lord he loved he went about doing good, till, with the weight of well-nigh seventy years upon him, "he cheerfully resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father."

# GEORGE WHITEFIELD, THE GREAT EVANGELIST

## VII

### *George Whitefield, the Great Evangelist*

THE peculiar glory of Methodism is that through its influence men of lowliest origin and often of sinful lives have been transformed into saints and apostles. But this is only a repetition of the miracle of grace which made Newton, the slave trader, the eloquent preacher; and John Bunyan, the swearing tinker, the most widely read of all English writers.

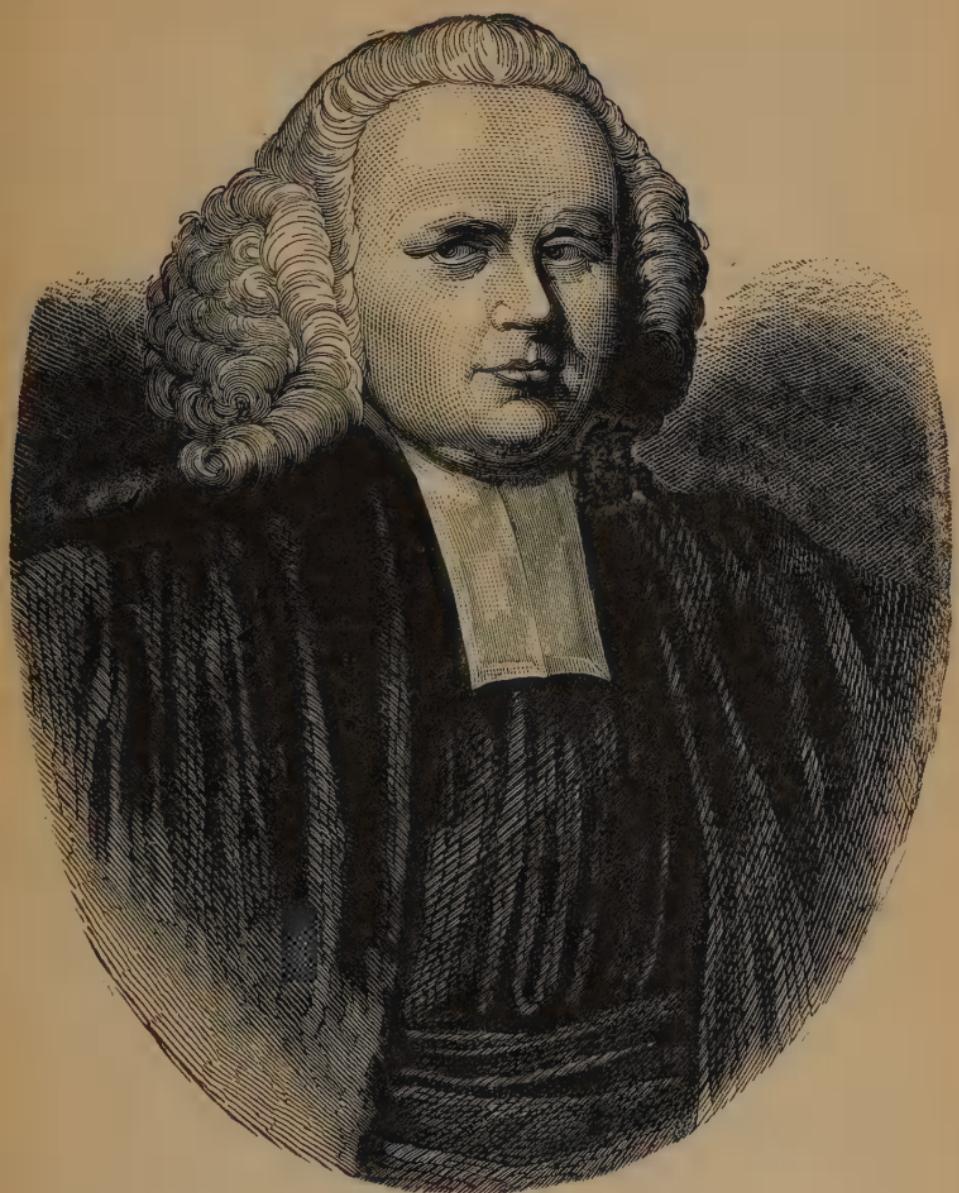
The story of George Whitefield, one of the mightiest preachers the world has ever seen, is a striking illustration of the transforming grace of God. He was born in Gloucester, England, in 1714, the son of an innkeeper. Two years later his father died, and the poor, neglected boy grew up in the evil atmosphere of the taproom, amid the coarse surroundings and bad examples of its lounging and drinking patrons.

When he was fifteen years old, he tells us, he put on his blue apron, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and became the common drawer in the inn which his mother kept in the great port of Bristol. He describes his youth as exceedingly vicious. “If the Almighty had not prevented

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me by his grace," he says, "I had now been sitting in darkness under the shadow of death." It is probable, however, that his sensitive conscience prompted these self-accusings in the sense in which Paul and John Wesley each declared himself to be the "chief of sinners."

The work of the Latin monk, Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, fell into his hands, and awakened in his soul the conviction of sin. The boy had exhibited some natural eloquence, and won some reputation by his school declamations. He earnestly desired to become a scholar. It was possible in those days for a poor student to enter Oxford as a "servitor," providing for his expenses chiefly by performing menial duties for his fellow-collegians. This young Whitefield resolved to do. Thomas à Kempis had made a deep impression upon his mind, but he had not yet apprehended the doctrine of justification by faith. He endeavored to earn the pardon of his sins by prayer and penance. He has left on record that when sixteen years of age he began to fast twice a week for thirty-six hours together. He prayed many times a day, and received the sacrament every ten days. He fasted himself almost to death during the forty days of Lent, and practiced private devotions seven times a day. "But," he adds, "I knew no more that I



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was to be born a new creature in Jesus Christ than if I was never born at all."

About this time he heard of the Methodists, and procured at last an introduction to the Oxford "Holy Club." "They built me up daily," he says, "in the knowledge and fear of God, and taught me to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." He now began to "live by rule," from which practice the Methodists acquired their name. He found this practice at first difficult, but at last delightful. He engaged in the practice of visiting the poor and neglected, the sick and the prisoners.

The state of morality at Oxford was very low. A subtle infidelity prevailed, and even the observance of religion was cold and formal. "This zealous young soul passed through," says Dr. Stevens, "an ordeal of agonizing self-conflicts. He selected the poorest food and the meanest apparel, and by dirty shoes, patched raiment, and coarse gloves endeavored to mortify his burdened spirit." The students threw dirt at him in the street, and when he knelt down to pray he felt such pressure of soul and body that the sweat dripped from his face.

"God only knows," he writes, "how many nights I have lain upon my bed groaning under what I felt. Whole days and nights have I spent lying prostrate on the ground in silent or

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vocal prayer." During Lent, for the most part, he ate nothing but coarse bread and sage tea. He prayed under the trees at night, trembling with the cold, till the college bell called him to his room, where he often spent in tears and supplications the hours which should have brought him sleep. His health sank under these rigors. But at last he was able to lay hold of the cross by a living faith and the burden of his guilt rolled forever away.

Shortly after this he was ordained by the Bishop of Gloucester. "I can call heaven and earth to witness," he wrote, "that when the bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me.

He now set forth on his flaming evangel, "the John the Baptist of Methodism," to prepare the way in both hemispheres for the Wesleys and their fellow-helpers. He was without a guinea in the world. The good bishop made him a present of five sovereigns. His marvelous eloquence was soon felt as a spell of power. At his first sermon it was reported that fifteen of his hearers had gone mad. The bishop only wished that the madness might not pass away. Whitefield was called to London to preach in the grim old Tower, which had been the scene of many a somber tragedy. He labored with

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zeal among the soldiers in the barracks and hospitals, preaching every week at Ludgate Prison.

John Wesley, then in Georgia, invited him to proceed thither. "You ask me what you shall have?" he said. "Food to eat, raiment to put on, a house to lay your head in, such as your Lord had not; and a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Whitefield, therefore, started to Bristol to sail for America, preaching wherever he had a chance. The churches were thronged before dawn with people lighting their way with lanterns to hear him. He understood the language and the heart of the common people, and they heard him gladly. He spoke directly to their souls, which responded warmly to his appeals.

On shipboard he preached with strange power to the soldiers, sailors, emigrants—a wicked and reckless class. In Georgia he labored zealously among the Indians as well as among the white people. His sympathies were deeply touched on behalf of the many orphan children whom he found. He felt a call from God to create an asylum for their protection and training, and returned to England full of this design. But the Church established by law refused to permit her most gifted son to preach from her pulpits. With the Wesleys he soon began "ranging the

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kingdom," preaching on moor and common, at the village markets and at the crossroads. Soon great multitudes, increasing to five, ten, fifteen, and twenty thousand, listened to his soul-stirring sermons. "He could see the effect of his words by the white gutters made by tears which trickled down the blackened cheeks of the miners, for they came unwashed out of the coal-pits to hear him."

John Wesley could scarcely reconcile himself at first to this field of preaching. "Till very lately," he writes, "I was so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." But soon he, too, was preaching to the colliers and plowmen and fishermen throughout the kingdom.

At Moorfields and on Kennington Common the clear, ringing voice of Whitefield could be heard by vast multitudes who thronged to hear the new prophet. "Scores of carriages, hundreds of horsemen, and thirty or forty thousand on foot," says Dr. Stevens, "thronged around him. Their singing could be heard two miles off, and his own voice a mile. Wagons and scaffolds were hired to the throng that they might the better hear and see the wonderful preacher, who, consecrated and

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gowned as a clergyman of the national hierarchy, had broken away from its rigid deccrum and, like his divine Master, had come out into the highways and hedges to save their neglected souls."

The people contributed generously to his orphan asylum. He records one collection of which nearly one half consisted of nearly ten thousand pieces of copper.

In 1739 Whitefield again visited America. His eloquence aroused the good Quakers and Presbyterians of Philadelphia to enthusiasm. His favorite out-of-door pulpit was the balcony of the old courthouse in Market Street. His voice could be heard on the opposite shore of the Delaware. From Savannah to Boston he ranged through the country. Twenty thousand persons gathered beneath the trees on Boston Common to hear him. At New Haven the Legislature was in session. He preached before them with wonderful power and pathos. "Thanks be to God," said the aged governor of the province, "for such refreshment on our way to heaven." In seventy-five days he had preached one hundred and seventy-five sermons, and stirred the consciences of thousands from Maine to Georgia.

An unhappy alienation for a time now took place between Whitefield and his old friends, the Wesleys. Whitefield had adopted the Calvin-

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istic doctrine of election. He felt himself to have been so vile a sinner that he could not but ascribe his own conversion to infinite and sovereign grace which had elected him from all eternity to everlasting life. But the estrangement between such loving hearts could not long continue. They were soon reconciled, and continued to labor in love and loyalty till their lives' end.

Whitefield was frequently assaulted and maltreated. Yet his influence over a turbulent mob was marvelous. During the Whitsuntide holidays, when drummers, trumpeters, merry-andrews, masters of puppet shows, exhibitors of wild beasts, and players were all busy in entertaining their respective groups, he shouted his text, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and boldly charged home upon them the vice and peril of their dissipations. Stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and dead cats were thrown at him. "My soul," he says, "was among lions." But before long he prevailed, and the immense multitude were turned into lambs. No less than a thousand notes were afterward handed up to him for prayers from persons who had been brought "under conviction" that day, and soon after upward of three hundred were received into the society at one time. Many of them were "the devil's castaways," as he called them. "Num-

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bers that seemed to have been bred up for Tyburn were at that time plucked as brands from the burning."

In 1750, one morning at five o'clock, a great earthquake shook the city of London. Wesley was preaching in the Foundry at the time, and cried out to the agitated people, "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; for the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." London looked like a sacked city, with people flying in coaches and on foot to escape the impending peril. The earthquake shocks continued, and Whitefield preached amid a midnight tempest in Hyde Park to an awe-stricken multitude on the more dreadful terrors of the dissolving world and of the judgment day.

He continued year after year ranging through the kingdom from Land's End to Edinburgh and Glasgow. "Invitations," he wrote, "came from every direction. I want more tongues, more souls, more bodies for the Lord Jesus." He preached on one tour one hundred and eighty sermons in three months to hundreds of thousands of hearers. In Edinburgh in four weeks he preached to nearly ten thousand hearers every day. "O that I could fly from pole to pole publishing the everlasting Gospel!" he

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wrote. "I have scarce known sometimes whether I was in heaven or on earth."

In Dublin he was assailed by a Roman Catholic mob. "Stones flew about him from all directions," writes Dr. Stevens, "and he reeled under them until he was breathless and dripping with blood. A few of his friends had followed him, and now washed the blood from his wounds; but as soon as he revived the family, fearing their house would be demolished, entreated him to leave them. As it was perilous for him to go out, a mechanic offered him his wig and cloak as a disguise. He put them on; but, ashamed of such apparent cowardice, threw them off with disdain, determined to face the populace in his proper habit. A Methodist preacher brought a coach to the door. Whitefield leaped in and rode unhurt, and with what he calls 'Gospel triumph,' through whole streets of Roman Catholics, who threatened him at every step of the way. None, he says, but those who were spectators of the scene could form an idea of the affection with which he was received by the weeping, mourning, but now joyful, Methodists."

Strange that so saintly a man should be thus assailed. Yet play actors caricatured him on the boards of the theater, letters threatening his life were sent him, and more than once a

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ruffian came into the pulpit to attack him with clinched fists.

Many were the dangers which this great evangelist encountered by sea and land. Like the apostle whom in his burning zeal he so much resembled, he might refer to his journeys often, his perils in the city and in the wilderness, to his weariness and painfulness, his watchings, his fastings, and his manifold infirmities. In traversing the pathless American forests he sometimes could hear the wolves "howling like a kennel of hounds," and had at night to keep them at bay by blazing fires. He had to ford icy rivers, and once was nearly drowned in crossing the Potomac amid the rigors of midwinter.

Seldom has such a burning soul been tabernacled in so frail a body. The latter portion of his life was one long martyrdom of suffering. Once after preaching he was so exhausted that as he was laid upon a bed he heard the bystanders say, "He is gone." Again he writes: "I was in all appearance a dying man, expecting to be with my Maker before morning. I spoke with peculiar energy. Such effects followed the word I thought it worth dying a thousand times."

Yet his zeal burned the more intensely the nearer he drew to the end of his labors. Four-

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teen times he visited Scotland in the rude and uncomfortable coaches of the period. During the last of these visits we read that he preached "generally twice, sometimes thrice, a day, and once five times." When his health was at its worst his short allowance of preaching was once a day and thrice on Sunday. To get into the pulpit seemed to put new life into his dying frame. While thousands hung upon his words he seemed to soar like a seraph to the gate of heaven, and to speak as one who saw the secrets veiled from mortal sight. Forty-two times he crossed the Irish Channel to preach to the turbulent yet generous-hearted Irish people. Thirteen times he crossed the Atlantic in the crowded and comfortless vessels of the time, often consuming eleven weeks on the voyage. Once his vessel lay a month in the Downs waiting for a favorable wind. He had prayers and preaching on shipboard every day. We read of him after such a voyage lingering for three weeks between life and death, but preaching repeatedly, "though he had to be carried like a child." From Georgia to Maine he ranged through the forest wilderness of America, preaching in its scattered towns to eager multitudes. In Great Britain, from the mountains of Wales to the heathy moors of Scotland, in crowded cities and on barren wolds, his persuasive voice was

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heard pleading with men to flee from the wrath to come.

Often he preached beneath the gallows tree, standing upon the coffin of the criminal who was to be executed, and, ascending with him to the scaffold, prayed with him to the last. At five o'clock on a winter's morning thousands were drawn without the city to listen to the story of Calvary from his lips. "I have seen," writes a spectator, "Moorfields as full of lanterns at these times as the Haymarket is full of flambeaux of an opera night."

Never were more disinterested labors than those of Whitefield. While raising thousands of pounds for charitable objects, he lived and died a poor man. At one service he collected £600 for the people of an obscure village in Germany, which had been burned down, for which he received the thanks of the Prussian sovereign. He maintained for years a household of over a hundred orphan children in Georgia, by the voluntary contributions of his hearers, most of whom themselves were poor. He even sold his furniture to meet the expenses of the orphan house. He might, indeed, have enjoyed ease and leisure if he would. He was offered £800 a year in Philadelphia to become a settled pastor for but half the time, leaving him six months to range the continent. But

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he could brook no trammels on his freedom to go whithersoever the Spirit called him, and the tempting offer was declined.

The profound humility, the true lowness of spirit, of this great man is one of the noblest traits in his character. He exhorts his friends at Savannah to "pray that he may know himself to be, what really he is, less than the least of them all." In the midst of his apostolic labors he exclaims, "O that I may at length learn to live! I am ashamed of my sloth and lukewarmness, and long to be on the stretch for God." Again, near the close of his life of unprecedented toil, he writes with undeserved self-upbraiding, "O to *begin* to be a Christian and a minister of Jesus."

Notwithstanding the doctrinal differences between himself and his early friend, John Wesley, he ever cherished toward him feelings of the deepest and tenderest regard. When a small-souled bigot asked him if he thought he should see John Wesley in heaven he replied, "I fear not, for he will be so near the throne and you and I so far away that we shall scarce be able to catch a sight of him."

In spite of the carpings of mole-eyed malice few men ever awakened such enthusiastic admiration and warm affection. The common people heard him gladly. Nor were the higher

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ranks insensible to the spell of his eloquence. More than once in America the Legislature and the Judges' Sessions adjourned in order to hear him preach. Philosophers like Franklin and Hume esteemed his correspondence with them a privilege, and many titled and noble persons deemed themselves honored by his friendship.

It is difficult after the lapse of more than a hundred years since his death to fully comprehend the secret of his wonderful eloquence and of his spell-like power over the souls of men. If his delivery were the product of art, it was certainly the perfection of art, for it was entirely concealed.

While he was a great master of words, he studied especially plainness of speech. His appeals touched every heart and held the attention of every hearer. A worthy shipbuilder narrates that he could usually during a sermon build a ship from stem to stern, but under Mr. Whitefield he could not lay a single plank.

The voice of this "son of thunder" was one of rich, musical quality and of great strength. The philosophic Franklin computed, by practical experiment, that he could easily be heard by thirty thousand persons. Indeed, he often held audiences of over twenty thousand spell-bound by his eloquence. His dramatic ability was such that his auditors seemed actually to see

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the things which he described. Once, while preaching to an audience of sailors at New York, he thus portrayed in vivid words the terrors of a shipwreck: "Hark! don't you hear the distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightning? The air is dark. The tempest rages. Our masts are gone! What next?" The unsuspecting tars, as if struck by the power of magic, arose, and with united voices exclaimed, "Take to the long boat, sir!" The celebrated actor, Garrick, was heard to say that he would give a hundred guineas if he could only say "O!" as Mr. Whitefield did. Hume, though one of the coldest and most skeptical of men, said it was worth going twenty miles to hear him. The philosopher, Franklin, as he tells us, listening to a charity sermon, resolved to give nothing; but under the power of the preacher's appeals he "emptied his pocket wholly in the collector's plate—gold, silver, and all."

But the crowning glory of his preaching was that it was accompanied with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Hundreds were pricked to the heart and led to repentance and faith. In a single week he received a thousand letters from persons under conviction of sin through his preaching, and wherever he labored he won scores and hundreds of trophies of divine grace.

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A marked characteristic of Whitefield was his tenderness, his sympathy for sinners, his burning love for souls. He that would move others must himself be moved. Hence multitudes were melted into tears because tears were in the preacher's words, his voice, and often on his cheeks. "You blame me for weeping," he says, "but how can I help it when you will not weep for yourselves, although your immortal souls are upon the verge of destruction?"

Whitefield used to pray that he might die in the pulpit or just after leaving it. His prayer was almost literally granted him. He died as he lived, in the midst of labors more abundant than those of almost any other man. The last entry in his Journal, July 29, 1770, is that during the month he had completed a five-hundred-mile circuit in New England, preaching and traveling through the heat every day. At Exeter, Mass., he was requested to preach again. A friend remonstrated, "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to the pulpit." "True," he replied, and clasping his hands, exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, if I have not yet finished my course, let me speak for thee once more in the fields and then come home and die." As he entered the pulpit he seemed like a dying man. Yet for two hours he exhorted the people like a man who already beheld the realities

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of the eternal world. At this last service an intending persecutor, with a pocketful of stones, said, "Sir, I came to break your head, but God has broken my heart."

After the sermon he rode on to Newburyport, a distance of fifteen miles. As he retired to his chamber on the last evening of his life so many were desirous of hearing him that he stood upon the stairs with his candlestick in his hand, and addressed them with much feeling till the candle burned low in its socket—like the lamp of his life then flickering to extinction.

During the night the asthmatic spasms, to which he had been for so many years a martyr, came on with increased violence. He was removed to the open window to enable him to breathe with less difficulty, but after an hour's suffering his spirit passed away. He left no dying testimony; but he had borne so many for God during his life that there was no need. His labors in two hemispheres, the eighteen thousand sermons that he preached, his many journeyings by sea and land, his undying zeal for the salvation of souls—these were a testimony which shall be an inspiration and a spell while the world shall last.

He was buried beneath the pulpit of the Old South Church, Newburyport, and thither pilgrims from many lands have come to pay their

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tribute of homage to the memory of the greatest preacher since the days of Chrysostom. One of these thus describes his visit to Whitefield's tomb: "We descended to the vault. There were three coffins before us. Two pastors of the church lay on either side and the remains of Whitefield in the center. The cover was slipped aside, and they lay beneath my eye. I had stood before his pulpits; I had seen his books, his ring, his chairs; but never before had I looked upon part of his very self. The skull, which is perfect, clean, and fair, I received, as is the custom, into my hands. Thought and feeling were busy and we gave expression to the sentiments that possessed us, by solemn psalmody and fervent prayer."

The Quaker poet, Whittier, has thus sketched in tuneful lines the salient features in the life and character of this great man, and with the quotation we close this review of his labors:

"Lo! by the Merrimack Whitefield stands  
In the temple that never was made by hands—  
Curtains of azure, and crystal wall,  
And dome of the sunshine over all—  
A homeless pilgrim, with dubious name  
Blown about on the winds of fame:  
Now as an angel of blessing classed,  
And now a mad enthusiast.  
Called in his youth to sound and gauge  
The moral lapse of his race and age,

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And sharp as truth the contrast draw  
Of human frailty and perfect law ;  
Possessed by one dread thought, that lent  
Its goad to his fiery temperament,  
Up and down the world he went,  
A John the Baptist, crying, Repent !

“ And the hearts of people where he passed  
Swayed as the reeds sway in the blast,  
Under the spell of a voice which took  
In its compass the flow of Siloa’s Brook  
And the mystical chime of the bells of gold  
On the ephod’s hem of the priest of old ;  
Now the roll of thunder, and now the awe  
Of the trumpet heard in the Mount of Law.

“ A solemn fear on the listening crowd  
Fell like the shadow of a cloud ;  
The sailor reeling from out the ships  
Whose masts stood thick in the river-slips  
Felt the jest and the curse die on his lips.  
Listened the fisherman rude and hard ;  
The calker rough from the builder’s yard ;  
The man of the market left his load ;  
The teamster leaned on his bending goad ;  
The maiden and youth beside her felt  
Their hearts in a closer union melt,  
And saw the flowers of their love in bloom  
Down the endless vistas of life to come.  
Old age sat feebly brushing away  
From his ears the scanty locks of gray,  
And careless boyhood, living the free,  
Unconscious life of bird and tree,  
Suddenly wakened to a sense  
Of sin and its guilty consequence.

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“ It was as if an angel’s voice  
Called the listeners up for their final choice;  
As if a strong hand rent apart  
The veils of sense from soul and heart,  
Showing in light ineffable  
The joys of heaven and woes of hell:  
All about in the misty air  
The hills seem kneeling in silent prayer;  
The rustle of leaves, the moaning sedge,  
The water’s lap on its graveled edge,  
The wailing pines, and, far and faint,  
The wood-dove’s note of sad complaint—  
To the solemn voice of the preacher lent  
An undertone of low lament;  
And the roar of the sea from its sandy coast,  
On the easterly wind now heard, now lost,  
Seemed the murmurous sound of the judgment host.

“ So the flood of emotion deep and strong  
Troubled the land as he swept along,  
But left a result of holier lives—  
Tenderer mothers and worthier wives ;  
The husband and father, whose children fled  
And sad wife wept when his drunken tread  
Frightened peace from his rooftree’s shade  
And a rock of offense his hearthstone made,  
In a strength that was not his own began  
To rise from the brute’s to the plane of man;  
Old friends embraced, long held apart  
By evil counsel and pride of heart;  
And penitence saw through misty tears,  
In the bow of hope on its cloud of fears,  
The promise of heaven’s eternal years—  
The peace of God for the world’s annoy—  
Beauty for ashes, and oil of joy !

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"Under the church of Federal Street,  
Under the tread of its Sabbath feet,  
Walled about by its basement stones  
Lie the marvelous preacher's bones.  
No saintly honors to them are shown,  
No sign nor miracle have they known;  
But he who passes the ancient church  
Stops in the shade of its belfry porch  
And ponders the wonderful life of him  
Who lies at rest in that charnel dim.  
Long shall the traveler strain his eye  
From the railroad car, as it plunges by,  
And the vanishing town behind him search  
For the slender spire of the Whitefield Church;  
And feel for one moment the ghosts of trade  
And fashion and folly and pleasure laid  
By the thought of that life of pure intent,  
That voice of warning, yet eloquent,  
Of one on the errands of angels sent.  
And if where he labored the flood of sin  
Like a tide from the harbor-bar sets in,  
And over a life of time and sense  
The church spires lift their vain defense—  
As if to scatter the bolts of God  
With the points of Calvin's thunder-rod—  
Still, as the gem of its civic crown,  
Precious beyond the world's renown,  
His memory hallows the ancient town!"

## VIII

**Selina, Countess of Huntingdon**

THE history of early Methodism, like the history of primitive Christianity, shows that not many mighty, not many noble, were called to the work of the Gospel. Both won their trophies chiefly among God's great family of the poor. But as there were those of Cæsar's household who acknowledged Christ, so there were those of noble rank who became the friends of Methodism. One of the most notable of these was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon.

The names of Wesley and Whitefield are inseparably joined as the apostles of Methodism, yet a difference of opinion on doctrinal grounds soon led to a divergence of operations and a division of interests. Whitefield was destined to be the flaming herald whose mission it was to revive the almost extinct spiritual life of the Church of England and to establish that Calvinistic Methodism which is so potent for good in the principality of Wales to the present day.

It was with this branch of Methodism that Lady Huntingdon was connected. She was of noble birth, the daughter of the Earl of Ferrers,

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and was remotely connected with the royal family. In her early life she was married to Theophilus Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon. Lady Elizabeth and Lady Margaret Hastings, her sisters-in-law, had become interested in the Oxford Methodists. Through their influence and through severe personal and family affliction the countess was led to a religious life and to a strong sympathy with the methods and principles of the evangelists, especially of Whitefield.

Her husband sent for Bishop Benson to restore her to a "saner mind," but the learned prelate failed in the attempt. Although she moved in the most aristocratic circles, the countess was not ashamed of the lowly and despised Methodists through whom she had received such spiritual benefit. She invited John Wesley to her residence at Downington Park, where he preached to fashionable congregations the same uncompromising Gospel that he declared at Gwennap Pit or Moorfields Common. With a wise prevision of one of the greatest evangelistic agencies of the age, she specially encouraged the employment of a lay ministry, against the strong prejudices of the Wesleys.

When Wesley's first Conference was held in London, in 1744, the entire body was entertained at her elegant mansion at Chelsea. She used her

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social influence in high places with much effect on behalf of brave John Nelson, who had been impressed into the army and suffered bonds and imprisonment for conscience' sake. He was rescued from his persecutors and set free to range the kingdom, proclaiming everywhere the great salvation.

In 1748 Lady Huntingdon became a widow. Henceforth her life was devoted to the promotion of Christ's kingdom. Whitefield became one of her permanent chaplains, and the trembling plumes on the heads of the court dames in the elegant salons of the mansion at Chelsea, no less than the tear-washed furrows on the grimy faces of the Cornish miners, attested the power of his message. High-born and titled hearers were brought under the influence of the simple Gospel story, and not infrequently with saving and sanctifying results. Lord St. John became a convert from the fashionable skepticism of the times to the faith of Christ. His brother, the witty Bolingbroke, complimented the preacher, but despised his message. The wife of Lord Chesterfield and her sister, the Countess of Delitz, received the Gospel and died in the triumphs of faith. Many "elect ladies" of the highest rank became devout Christians, adorning with their holy and useful lives the doctrines of the Lord Jesus.

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Many of Whitefield's courtly hearers were doubtless attracted by the fashionable character of the assemblage, as they would be to the opera. Others were fascinated by the eloquence of the preacher, as they would be by the skill of an actor. The skeptical Hume, for instance, said that he would go twenty miles to hear him; and Garrick, the actor, who doubtless took lessons in style from his matchless elocution, declared that he could make one weep by the way in which he pronounced the word Mesopotamia.

Chesterfield paid him courtly compliments, and Horace Walpole employed his keen wit upon the earnest preacher whose solemn messages they both neglected and despised. The notorious Countess of Suffolk, the fair and frail favorite of George II, procured admission to one of the fashionable religious services. Mr. Whitefield's burning denunciations of sin, which probed her guilty conscience to the quick, were an unwonted and unwelcome experience to the proud court beauty. She flew into a violent passion, abused the countess to her face, and declared that she had been deliberately insulted. Deeply mortified, she went her way and returned no more.

Nor was the zeal of the high-born and pious lady whose life and character are the subject of our present study restrained to mere passive

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patronage of those zealous evangelists—a sort of *dilettante* piety that cost her little. She proved her sincerity by her self-sacrifice and by her generous donations to the cause of God. She curtailed her expenditure and reduced her domestic establishment that she might build chapels for the poor. She gave up her liveried servants and carriage and sold her jewels that she might have money for charitable purposes. In London, Bristol, and Dublin she purchased public halls and theaters and renovated dilapidated chapels that the Gospel might be preached to the untaught masses. Many new chapels were also erected by her liberal aid in England, Ireland, and especially in the principality of Wales. In these philanthropic labors she expended not less than half a million of dollars—a sum relatively much larger then than now.

The practical heathenism of a large portion of Great Britain, notwithstanding the vast organization and immense revenues of the Established Church, appealed strongly to her Christian sympathy. She devised a plan for the evangelization of the kingdom. With a shrewd practical method she divided all England into six districts, to be systematically visited by traveling “canvassers,” as she called them, who were zealously to preach the Gospel in every village, town, and hamlet in the country. With

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her were associated in these pious labors some of the most learned and devout evangelical clergymen and dissenting ministers in the kingdom, such as Venn, Madan, Shirley, Romaine, Toplady, Dr. Conyers, Berridge, Howel Harris, Fletcher, Benson, Whitefield, the Wesleys, and many others.

With certain like-minded noble ladies she made tours through many parts of England and Wales, accompanied by eminent evangelists, who everywhere preached the Gospel to attentive multitudes. Where they had opportunity they preached in the parish churches or in Wesleyan or dissenting chapels; indeed, some of the evangelists were parish clergymen and had churches of their own. But frequently the churches were closed against the itinerants; in which cases they preached in the churchyards, on the highways, or in the fields. Under the burning words of Whitefield all Yorkshire and the neighboring counties were kindled to a flame; then, pressing on to Scotland or over sea to America, he left to his fellow-workers the task of organizing into churches the multitudes of converts quickened into spiritual life by his apostolic labors. In this good work the Countess of Huntingdon and the elect ladies who journeyed with her took a profound interest, yet she never transcended what was deemed the bounds

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of decorum for her sex by taking any part in the public assemblies. While the countess counseled the converts privately and assisted the evangelists in planning their labors, she was only a quiet hearer at the public preaching.

The record of a grand “field day” on one of those preaching excursions is preserved. It was at Cheltenham, in Gloucestershire. The use of the parish church was refused for preaching, but Whitefield mounted a tombstone in the churchyard and addressed the assembled thousands from the words, “Ho! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” Many of the hearers fell prostrate on the graves, others sobbed aloud, and all seemed stricken with a solemn awe. “Whitefield’s words of exhortation,” says Venn, “cut like a sword.” “A remarkable power from on high,” wrote the countess, “accompanied the message, and many felt the arrows of distress.”

Though excluded from the parish church, the Methodist evangelists were not unbefriended. A nobleman of the highest rank, the friend of his sovereign, a member of the Privy Council and Secretary of State—the Earl of Dartmouth—stood by their sides among the graves, and opened his hospitable mansion for their reception. That night Whitefield administered the sacrament in his house, and the next day, stand-

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ing on a table beside the door, preached to the multitude that filled the rooms within and thronged the grounds without.

It was this Lord Dartmouth to whom Cowper refers in the lines:

“We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways,  
And one who wears a coronet and prays.”

His name is commemorated in America by Dartmouth College, of which institution he was a patron. “They call my Lord Dartmouth an enthusiast,” said George III, who always had a profound respect for religion, “but surely he says nothing but what any Christian may and ought to say.”

Through the influence of Lady Huntingdon the friendship of the Wesleys and Whitefield became firmly cemented. These once estranged but now reconciled friends, unable to agree in doctrinal opinion, wisely agreed to differ, but kept up to the close of their lives a kindly interchange of Christian courtesies. They formed with each other and with the countess—their common friend and the peacemaker between them—a sort of formal “quadruple alliance,” as Charles Wesley called it, whereby they agreed to cooperate in their common work and to knit more firmly the bonds of Christian fellowship between them.

For John Wesley's genius for organization Lady Huntingdon had a profound regard. In this respect he was much superior to his more eloquent colleague, Whitefield. Indeed, the greatest historian of modern times has bestowed on him the eulogy of having had "a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu."\* The permanent and widespread organization of Arminian Methodism, as contrasted with the comparatively evanescent results of Whitefield's labors, is largely the result of Wesley's superior gifts of ecclesiastical legislation.

Far more than Whitefield did Lady Huntingdon possess this qualification, and had she been a man, the history and present status of Calvinistic Methodism might have been very different. She was deeply convinced of the need of a college for the training of ministers for the numerous chapels which, through her zeal and liberality, had sprung up in many parts of the country. She broached her scheme to John Wesley and others and received their hearty approval. A romantic and dilapidated old castle at Trevecca, in Wales, was accordingly purchased and fitted up as a place of residence and instruction for candidates for the ministry. This enterprise exhausted her means, but she was assisted by contributions from titled and

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\* Macaulay, *Review of Southey's Colloquies*.

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wealthy ladies who sympathized with her project.

The saintly and accomplished Fletcher became the first president, and the learned Wesleyan commentator, Joseph Benson, its head master. The first student was a poor collier, who subsequently became an able and useful vicar in the Established Church. The ancient cloisters were soon thronged with earnest students. No conditions of admission were imposed other than conversion to God and a purpose to enter the Christian ministry, either in the Established Church or in any dissenting body. In this truly catholic institution the students received lodging, maintenance, instruction, and an annual suit of clothes, at the expense of the countess.

The first anniversary of the college was celebrated as a religious festival of holy rejoicing. For nearly a week previously the scattered evangelists of the "Connection" continued to arrive in the courtyard of the picturesque old castle. Very different was the scene from those of tilt and tourney with which it had resounded in the days of knightly chivalry. Hymns and prayers and sermons in English and Welsh echoed beneath the ancient arches. On the great day of the feast Wesley and Fletcher, Shirley and Howel Harris, Arminian and Calvinist, English

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and Welsh, preached and prayed and administered the sacrament and celebrated the “love feast” together, all differences being forgotten in their common brotherhood in Christ. The ministers all dined together with Lady Huntingdon, while great baskets of bread and meat were distributed to the multitude in the courtyard. Thus they all kept high festival with gladness of heart before the Lord.

Still it was not then the purpose of either Wesley or Whitefield or Lady Huntingdon to establish a new sect. They were all attached members of the Church of England. Not till they were thrust forth from its embrace did they organize separate societies. In order to protect her numerous chapels from suppression or appropriation by the Established Church Lady Huntingdon was obliged to take advantage of the Act of Toleration, and thus convert her “Connection” into a dissenting community. The clergymen of the Establishment, who had hitherto been her most influential allies, now withdrew their aid, and preached no more in her chapels.

The countess, not content with the success of her evangelistic plans in Great Britain, resolved to extend her efforts to the New World. Whitefield died in 1769. The support of the orphanage and of the mission work in Georgia, objects of his deepest solicitude, became the cherished

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purpose of the Countess of Huntingdon. She resolved to send a principal and pastor to the orphanage, and a band of missionaries to labor among the colonists and blacks.

Before they sailed the missionaries preached daily to immense audiences in Whitefield's Tabernacle and in the open air on Tower Hill. At length, amid many prayers, not unmixed with the tears of thousands of spectators, the "destined vessel, richly freighted," sailed on its voyage. The missionaries had great success, especially among the colored people, and it seemed probable that Calvinistic Methodism would become the predominant type of religious belief throughout the Southern colonies of North America.

But Providence had willed otherwise. The orphanage was destroyed by fire. The Revolutionary War entirely disconcerted the plans of the countess. Most of the missionaries returned to Great Britain. The countess had acquired large estates in Georgia, which she held for missionary purposes. She corresponded with Washington for their recovery, and Benjamin Franklin acted as one of her trustees, but the disturbances caused by the prolonged war and severance of the colonies from the mother country prevented the restoration of her estates.

Full of years, as full of honors, like a ripe

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sheaf waiting to be gathered home, the Countess of Huntingdon drew near her end. Earthly distinctions had been hers, worldly wealth and troops of friends. But as she bent beneath the weight of four and eighty years, and faced the mysteries of the spirit world, what was the ground of her confidence and hope? Simply her humble trust in the atonement of her Redeemer. As the outward body failed the inward spirit was renewed day by day.

Amid the sufferings of a lingering and painful sickness she exclaimed: "I am well; all is well—well forever. I see wherever I turn my eyes, whether I live or die, nothing but victory. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh! The thought fills my soul with joy unspeakable—my soul is filled with glory. I am as in the element of heaven itself. I am encircled in the arms of love and mercy; I long to be at home; O, I long to be at home!" Almost with her dying breath she exultingly declared, "My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father."

"Servant of God, well done!  
Rest from thy loved employ;  
The battle's fought, the victory's won;  
Enter thy Master's joy."

The very year that this aged saint passed away—1791—John Wesley also died. Thus de-

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parted from the toils of earth to the everlasting reward of heaven two of the most remarkable spirits of the eighteenth century, who more, we think, than any others left their impress on the age.

One of the most striking proofs of the moral and intellectual superiority of the Countess of Huntingdon was the influence that she exerted during a long series of years over many of the most eminent men of the time. Her private character was one of great simplicity and beauty. Says one who knew her well, “In conversing with her you forgot the earldom in her exhibition of humble, loving piety.” She sometimes asserted her woman’s prerogative in her tenacity of opinion and of purpose, but her opinions were the result of conscientious conviction and her purposes were purely unselfish. Her contributions to the needy were liberal to excess, so much so as often to leave herself embarrassed. At her death she left twenty thousand dollars to the poor. The residue of her large fortune was left for the endowment of sixty-four chapels, which had been erected chiefly through her efforts in different parts of the kingdom.

In the principality of Wales the influence of the Calvinistic Methodism of “Lady Huntingdon’s Connection” has been the most strongly felt. Largely as the result of the stimulus that

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it imparted, the thirty dissenting chapels of 1715 have increased to twenty-three hundred, so that “a chapel now dots nearly every three square miles of the country, and a million people—nearly the whole Welsh population—are found attending public worship some part of every Sabbath.”

IX

*John Fletcher and Mary Bosanquet*

THE picturesque shores of the Lake of Geneva have many religious and literary associations. Calvin and Zwingle, Voltaire and Rousseau, Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier, Gibbon and Byron, have given its terraced slopes and vine-clad hills a perpetual interest. At Nyon, the refuge of the persecuted Vaudois, beneath the shadow of its ivy-mantled castle, whose massy walls ten feet thick bear witness to the feudal tenure of the twelfth century, was born one of the most noteworthy of the Makers of Methodism. He was of an ancient family, allied to the princely house of Savoy. The comfortable mansion, conspicuous amid the humbler houses of the village, is still occupied by the descendant Flechères, who continue to maintain the name and religious reputation of the family.

Here Jean Guillaume de la Flechère, or John William Fletcher, as we would say, was born in 1729. He was designated by his pious Protestant parents for the ministry of the Reformed Church. He, therefore, received at the Univer-

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sity of Geneva a thorough education in the classical and oriental languages and in philosophy. His scholarship made him the pride of the university, and he carried off most of its prizes. He could not, however, accept the Calvinistic doctrines of the Genevan Church. He therefore declined to enter its ministry.

Like many of the Swiss, he adopted a military life, and sought service with a foreign government. The young soldier of fortune first offered his sword to Portugal, and received a captain's commission in the service of that country, with orders to join an expedition for Brazil. He was, however, by accident, or rather, let us say, by an all-wise Providence, prevented from sailing. A servant, on the very morning of his intended embarkation, spilled a kettle of boiling water on his legs. This confined him for some time to bed. The vessel in which he was to sail was lost at sea.

On the invitation of an uncle, who promised to secure a commission for him, he went to Flanders. But the death of his relative and the termination of the war again disappointed his hopes.

He now turned, as did many of his countrymen, to London, the great world-metropolis. His knowledge of ancient and modern languages well fitted him for the office of tutor, which posi-

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tion he accepted. In London, his curiosity being aroused by a casual conversation, he went to hear the Methodists. The doctrine of conversion and of the full assurance of faith came like a revelation to his soul. "Is it possible," he wrote, "that I who have always been accounted so religious, who have made divinity my study and received the premium for piety from my university for writings on divine subjects—is it possible that I should be so ignorant as not to know what faith is?" For months he was the subject of intense convictions of sin and deep searchings of heart. Indeed, it was not till after two years of mental struggle that he was able to exercise that faith that saveth the soul.

At the urgent solicitation of John Wesley he accepted orders in the Established Church in his twenty-eighth year. No man ever adorned the doctrines of the Lord Jesus with more saintly walk and conversation and more utter consecration of soul. He continued for some time in London, assisting John Wesley, laboring among the poor in the prisons and among the rich in Lady Huntingdon's mansion. He was offered a living at Dunham, which presented many of the coveted advantages of a rural rectory. "The parish was small, its labor light, the income good, being four hundred pounds." But

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the zealous evangelist declined the offer, as affording too much money for too little work. He therefore accepted, instead of the learned leisure of Dunham, the strenuous toil and meager income of Madeley.

This was an obscure parish in a densely peopled mining and manufacturing neighborhood. It shared the moral degradation only too common in the middle of the eighteenth century; but his tireless zeal and Christian devotion wrought a moral transformation throughout the entire region. The vicarage of Madeley became second in historic interest, throughout the Protestant world, only to the rectory of Epworth, in which Methodism was born. The people of the parish were dull and apathetic, devoted to the coarse amusements of badger-baiting and prize fighting, but Fletcher with apostolic fervor proclaimed the truths of the Gospel, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom" from house to house daily.

For months he went about the village at five o'clock on Sunday morning ringing a hand bell, that no one might be able to excuse his neglect of public worship on the ground of not being awakened in time. "Now he appeared suddenly at vulgar entertainments," says Dr. Schaff, "and with Knoxlike earnestness preached to

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the astounded revelers upon the folly of forbidden pleasure." "Those sinners," says John Wesley, "that tried to hide themselves from him he pursued to every corner of his parish by all sorts of means, public and private, early and late."

This moral earnestness provoked opposition and persecution. While many were reclaimed from their evil lives, the more vicious were exasperated to greater violence. A bull-bait was attempted on one occasion near the spot where he had announced a public service, and a part of the rabble was appointed to "bait the parson; to pull him from his horse, and to set the dogs on him." He escaped only by a providential detention at the funeral of a parishioner.

"His preaching against drunkenness," says Dr. Abel Stevens, whose narrative we abridge, "aroused all the maltmen and publicans of the town against him. A magistrate threatened him with his cane and with imprisonment, and many of the neighboring gentry and clergy joined his persecutors. A clergyman posted on the church door a paper charging him with schism and rebellion. Some of his friends were arrested. He was, in fine, subjected to the usual treatment of the Methodist clergy of the times, and he labored with their usual zeal and

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success. With incessant preaching he combined the most diligent pastoral labors. He went from house to house, sympathizing with the afflicted, helping the poor, ministering to the sick, and admonishing the vicious.

“ His liberality to the poor is said by his successor in the parish to have been scarcely credible. He led a life of severe abstinence that he might feed the hungry; he clothed himself in cheap attire that he might clothe the naked; he sometimes unfurnished his house that he might supply suffering families with necessary articles. Thus devoted to his holy office, he soon changed the tide of opposition which had raged against him, and won the reverence and admiration of his people; and many looked upon their homes as consecrated by his visits.”

Although of foreign birth and training, he preached in English with marvelous power, and, in the opinion of John Wesley, if he had but physical strength, he would have been the most eloquent preacher in England.

“ His devout habit of mind,” continues Dr. Stevens, “ quickly matured into saintliness itself. We look in vain through the records of Roman or Protestant piety for a more perfect example of the consecration of the whole life, inward and outward. For a time he erred by

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his asceticism, living on vegetables and bread, and devoting two whole nights each week to meditation and prayer, errors which he afterward acknowledged. He received Wesley's doctrine of perfection, and not only wrote in its defense, but exemplified it through a life of purity, charity, and labor which was as faultless, perhaps, as was ever lived by mortal man. Even in theological controversy his spirit was never impeachable." "Sir, he was a luminary," said Venn to a brother clergyman. "A luminary did I say? He was a *sun*." "I have known," he added, "all the great men of these fifty years, but I have known none like him."

In 1768 Fletcher was invited to become president of Lady Huntingdon's college for the ministerial training of young men at Trevecca, in Wales. He accepted the position, but did not leave his parish. "His frequent visits to the college were received," writes its head master, Benson, the Methodist commentator, "like those of an angel of God."

The fascination exercised by this saintly soul is reflected in the enthusiastic language of this generally cool and scholarly writer. "The reader," he says, "will pardon me if he thinks I exceed; my heart kindles while I write. Here it was I saw, shall I say an angel in

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human flesh? I should not far exceed the truth if I said so. But here I saw a descendant of fallen Adam so fully raised above the ruins of the fall that, though by the body he was tied down to earth, yet was his whole conversation in heaven; yet was his life from day to day hid with Christ in God. Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all-ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the elements in which he continually lived. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the schoolroom among the students. And they seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul!"

Closing his addresses he would say, "As many of you as are athirst for the fullness of the Spirit of God follow me into my room." Many usually hastened thither, and it was like going into the holiest of holies. Two or three hours were spent there in such prevailing prayer as seemed to bring heaven down to earth. "Indeed," says Benson, "I frequently thought, while attending to his heavenly discourse and divine spirit, that he was so different from and superior to the generality of mankind as to look more like Moses or Elijah, or some prophet or

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apostle come again from the dead, than a mortal man dwelling in a house of clay!"

In the judgment of Southey, "No age or country has ever produced a man of more enlivened piety or more perfect charity. No age has ever possessed a more apostolic minister." He was John Wesley's most faithful friend and fellow-helper, and was his choice as his personal successor. But this responsibility he modestly declined, and himself passed away before the death of the founder of Methodism.

The Trevecca College was entirely under the influence of Lady Huntingdon's Connection—the Calvinistic Methodists. Its growing divergence from Arminian doctrine led to Fletcher's resignation of the presidency, but without interruption of kind and Christian relations.

An unhappy controversy, characterized by only too much bitterness and theological rancor, now arose between the Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodists. An exception must be made, however, in the case of Fletcher's famous *Checks to Antinomianism*. Never has theological discussion been conducted in a more saintly spirit and with more Christian courtesy. "His controversial pamphlets," says Dr. Stevens, "may be read by devout men even as aids to devotion; they are severe only in the keenness of their arguments; they glow with a continuous but

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unobtrusive strain of Christian exhortation. The argument alternates with pleas for peace, and with directions ‘how to secure the blessings of peace and brotherly love.’ They are read more to-day,” he continues, “than they were during the excitement of the controversy. They control the opinions of the largest and most effective body of evangelical clergymen on the earth.”

“ His style,” says a competent critic, “ is clear, forcible, and sometimes ornate. He discusses the highest problems—as theories of the freedom of the will, prescience, and fatalism—in a manner which interests the ordinary reader, and the spiritual argument is cogent and thorough. No writer has so fairly balanced and reconciled the apparently opposite passages of Scripture.”

Fletcher not only stated the position of his opponent with fairness and candor, but in the case of Dr. Berridge proffered to print a reply with his own pamphlet and circulate it gratuitously, “to show that they made a loving war.”

Fletcher afterward made a personal visit to Dr. Berridge. As he entered the parsonage Berridge ran to him, took him into his arms, and wept. “My dear brother,” he sobbed, “this is indeed a satisfaction I never expected. How could we write against each other when we both aim at the same thing—the glory of God and the

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good of souls?" The servants being called in, Fletcher offered up a prayer filled with petitions for their being led by the Holy Spirit to greater degrees of sanctification and usefulness as ministers.

His broken health compelled the Swiss pastor to return for four years to his native land. Its snow-clad hills became to him the "Delectable Mountains," whence he had nearer and clearer vision of the city of the great King. He walked in the land of Beulah, quite on the verge of heaven. He preached, as strength permitted, to the peasant people, and drank health and refreshing from the pure air and inspiring scenery of the shores of Lake Leman.

Like many of the early Methodist preachers, John Fletcher had been too entirely engrossed in evangelistic toil, too much exposed to calumny and persecution, too poor in worldly estate, to permit of courtship and marriage. Yet he was not insusceptible to the charm and blessedness of wedded love. Five and twenty years before the date of which we write the youthful beauty and lovely character of Mary Bosanquet had won his heart. But she was rich and he was poor. Travel and study and abounding labors, and perhaps somewhat ascetic notions, postponed for long years the consummation of his dream of domestic happiness. Now these long-severed

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lives were to meet and flow on side by side with deepened joy.

We have seen by what strange leadings of God's providence John Fletcher had been turned from a life of earthly ambition to one of heavenly zeal. No less remarkable was the divine guidance by which Mary Bosanquet was saved from a career of fashion and of refined selfishness and consecrated to one of Christian service in the uplifting of the poor, the lowly, and the lost. Her memoir, written by herself, is a remarkable record of religious experience; and, as one of the classics of Methodist biography, has helped to mold the character and kindle the piety of successive generations. From this we sketch the salient events of her eventful life.

Mary Bosanquet was the daughter of wealthy and worldly parents. She was born in the year 1739, and in her youth was surrounded by associations unfavorable to a religious life. Nevertheless, she very early became the subject of spiritual influences. When in her fifth year, she says, she began to have much concern about her soul. She was a backward child, she naïvely confesses, and not very well read in the Scriptures at that early age—it would be very remarkable if she were. She could not, however, help observing the careless lives of those around her, till she began to doubt whether the Bible really

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meant what it said about the future life and the unseen world.

"About this time," she writes, "there came a servant maid to live with my father who had heard and felt some little of the power of inward religion. It was among the people called Methodists she had received her instructions." The conversation of this lowly and unlettered girl deepened the religious convictions of Mary Bosanquet. She thought if she could only become a Methodist she would be sure of salvation. But she soon found that it was not being joined to any people that would save her, but being joined by a living faith to Christ.

Still this way of faith seemed dark to her mind. When between seven and eight years old, as she mused on the question, "What can it be to know my sins forgiven?" she felt that if it were to die a martyr, she could do it, and she wished that the papists would come and burn her. But soon she was enabled to grasp the vital truth of salvation by faith, and exclaimed with joyful fervor, "I do, I do rely on Jesus; and God counts me righteous for what he has done and suffered, and has forgiven me all my sins!" "I was surprised," she adds, "that I could not find out this before;" a common experience of the soul on learning the simplicity of the way of salvation.

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Miss Bosanquet's worldly-minded parents, as their strange, unworldly child grew up, instead of fostering her religious feelings, endeavored to dissipate them by fashionable amusements. She was introduced to the gayeties of London society and taken to the ball and playhouse and other gay resorts. But she found no pleasure in these, to her, dreary amusements. "If I knew how to find the Methodists, or any who would show me how to please God," she wrote, "I would tear off all my fine things and run through the fire to them." "If ever I am my own mistress," she prophetically exclaimed, "I will spend half the day in working for the poor and the other half in prayer."

At length she made the acquaintance of some of the Methodists from whom so much spiritual profit was anticipated. But they did not quite answer the expectations of this earnest soul, hungering and thirsting after religious fellowship. 'But we must not form our judgment from the rich,' she remarks; "let us wait till we get acquainted with some of the poor among them; perhaps they will be the right Methodists, and more like the first Christians." It is not by concessions to the world, nor by the adoption of its spirit on the part of the Church, that the followers of fashion will be lured from its follies and brought to Christ.

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In her fourteenth year Miss Bosanquet received the rite of confirmation in the stately cathedral of St. Paul's, London. It was to her no idle form, but an intense reality—a solemn renewal of her covenant with God and consecration of herself to his service. She soon felt that she could no longer attend the theater, a place of fashionable resort to which her parents were addicted.

“I considered the playhouse,” wrote this mature young maiden, “had a tendency to weaken every Christian temper and to strengthen all that was contrary; to represent vice under the false color of virtue, and to lead, in every respect, to the spirit of the world—the friendship of which, the apostle declares, is enmity with God.” She therefore begged to be left at home, and on the refusal of her request laid open her whole heart to her father. Notwithstanding his remonstrance, she was firm in her obedience to the dictates of her conscience. It was a season of great trial, she wrote, but the Lord stood by her and strengthened her.

One incident, recorded as occurring in her seventeenth year, gives us a glimpse of the gay world in the middle of the last century. With her father and a numerous company she visited the *Royal George*, the man-of-war whose subsequent tragic fate was made the subject of Cow-

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per's pathetic ballad.\* When they got to the ship "it seemed like a town, such a variety of places like shops were all around." The commander, after doing the honors of the ship, proposed a dance. "Now, Miss Bosanquet, what will you do? You cannot run away," gayly queried one of her friends, for her scruples were well known. Just then the unexpected approach of the Prince of Wales (afterward George III) and Admiral Anson was announced, and the dance was adjourned *sine die*, to the great relief of Miss Bosanquet.

While in the boat which conveyed them from the ship the party was exposed to imminent peril from a rough sea. "How are you so calm?" one of the votaries of pleasure asked our heroine. "We are in God's hands," she answered; "I am quite ready to sink or to be saved."

Her convictions of duty were exposed to another trial. A gentleman of wealth and religious profession sought her hand in marriage. Her parents and even her religious advisers favored the match. She could not, however, reconcile the fashionable habits of her suitor with his

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\* It will be remembered that the vessel sank in port, with all her crew, while careened for the purpose of cleaning her copper sheathing. As the ballad has it—

" His sword was in its sheath,  
His fingers held the pen,  
When Kempfent went down  
With twice four hundred men."

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religious professions, and neither her “understanding nor affection could approve the proposal;” so his offer was kindly but firmly declined. She was reserved for a nobler destiny than to be a mere leader of fashion.

Through mental worry and physical weakness she fell into a low, nervous fever, which her parents attributed to her religion. Severe medical treatment and confinement in a dark room were ordered. “Will you put me in a madhouse, papa?” asked the poor, distraught girl. “No,” replied her father, “but you must be shut up at home unless you strive against this lowness.”

But God graciously helped her in her extremity. She seemed to see a light and hear a voice which assured her, “Thou shalt walk with me in white,” and she was greatly benefited by the society of some of the wise mothers in Israel of London Methodism. She satisfied herself by seven good reasons which she records that she ought no longer to conform, in the matter of dress and personal adornment, with the somewhat imperious requirements of the fashion of the times. “I was perplexed,” she writes, “to know how far to conform and how far to resist. I feared, on the one hand, disobedience to my parents, and, on the other hand, disobedience to God.”

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One day her father said to her, “There is a particular promise which I require of you, that you will never, on any occasion, either now or hereafter, attempt to make your brothers what you call a Christian.”

“I think, sir,” she answered, “I dare not consent to that.”

“Then,” he replied, “you force me to put you out of my house. I do not know,” he continued, “that you ever disengaged me willfully in your life but only in these fancies.”

She was now twenty-one years of age and had a small fortune of her own. She therefore engaged a maidservant and took lodgings, but did not go to them, hoping that she might still remain beneath her father’s roof. One day her mother sent her word that she must leave that night for her lodgings, and that the family carriage would convey her personal effects. She bade farewell to the servants, who stood in a row in tears, and went forth from her father’s house, banished for conscience’ sake.

Her lodgings had not, as yet, chair, nor table, nor bed; so, after a supper of bread, rank butter, and water, this delicate child of luxury lay upon the floor in the cold moonlight which streamed through the uncurtained windows into her room, the sweet solemnity whereof, she writes, well agreed with the tranquillity of her spirit.

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She thus records her feelings under this trial : “ I am cast out of my father’s house. ‘ I know the heart of a stranger.’ I am exposed to the world, and know not what snares may be gathering around me. I have a weak understanding and but little grace.” She, therefore, cried unto God and found a sweet calm overspread her spirit. She remembered the words, “ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,” and was cheered by the promise, “ When thy father and mother forsake thee, the Lord shall take thee up.”

She was, however, permitted to visit her home, but the parting as she took leave, she says, made the wound bleed afresh.

She was soon joined by Sarah Ryan, a pious widow, and devoted her life thenceforth to works of Christian charity. She shortly after removed to a house of her own at Laytonstone, her native village, and converted it into a school for orphan children and home for destitute women. Before long she had received thirty-five children and thirty-four grown-up persons. With the aid of her friend, Mrs. Ryan, she devoted herself with enthusiasm to this work. For economical reasons the whole household were clothed in dark purple cotton dresses of uniform pattern. Many, both of the children and adults, were sickly, and demanded much

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physical care, and all received wise moral guidance and control. The children were trained in habits of usefulness. They rose between four and five, had early prayers and breakfast. School, housework, and recreation occupied the day, and by eight at night, after prayers, they went to bed.

Our gentle heroine had great need, she said, of wisdom and patience, as may well be conceived. The novel enterprise met with much criticism and opposition. On Sunday evenings a religious service for the neighbors was held in the house, and sometimes "when the nights were dark a mob used to collect at the gate and throw dirt at the people as they went out; and when they were gone the mob used to come into the yard and, putting their faces to a window which had no shutters, roar and howl like wild beasts."

One night "four shabby-looking men with great sticks in their hands," the ringleaders of a mob, forced their way into the kitchen, but Miss Bosanquet explained the Methodist "Rules of Society" to them, and asked if they would accept copies. Subdued by her womanly winsomeness and by the unexpected request, "they received them with a respectful bow and went out."

This was a truly remarkable work for a young

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lady of twenty-three to carry on, but she derived much help from her friend, Mrs. Ryan, who had previously had valuable experience as the head of the domestic department of Wesley's Woodhouse Grove School.

At times the expenses of the establishment exceeded its income, but in answer to prayer help always came when most needed, often from anonymous sources. A wealthy Methodist lady, a Miss Lewen, came to live in the family, where, after a time, she became ill. By her will she made provision for the bequest of two thousand pounds to the orphanage. But Miss Bosanquet, fearing that God's cause might be reproached thereby, prevailed on her to let it be burned, for "what is two thousand pounds," she exclaimed, "or two hundred thousand pounds, compared to the honor of my God?" When Miss Lewen was dying she called for pen and paper, saying, "I cannot die easy unless I write something of my mind concerning Sister Bosanquet having the two thousand pounds," and renewed the bequest. But the money was never claimed, that the cause of God might be above reproach.

Shortly after this both Miss Bosanquet's parents died. She had the privilege of alleviating their last illness by her filial ministrations. She received from them many marks of affection, and on their death found her fortune largely

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increased. But the expenses of her growing household more than kept pace with her increase of income.

The orphan institution was now removed to Cross Hall, in Yorkshire, where a large farm was secured for it. Miss Bosanquet was now employed, with her characteristic energy, in building, farming, malting, and other operations, in order to meet the growing expenses of the institution. The religious services were continued as at Laytonstone, and worshipers from far and near flocked to the meetings so numerously that there was not room for their accommodation. Miss Bosanquet, therefore, established similar services at convenient places throughout the country. In 1770 Wesley visited the institution, and records in his Journal that "it is a pattern and a general blessing to the country."

A gentleman of wealth and of religious character, struck with admiration of her person and disposition, asked Miss Bosanquet's hand in marriage. "Though I had a grateful love toward him," she writes, "I could not find that satisfying affection which flows from perfect confidence, and which is the very spirit and soul of marriage." She therefore declined to give her hand where she could not freely and fully give her heart. She accepted a life of toil

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and anxiety rather than one of luxury and ease, at what she conceived to be the call of duty.

Notwithstanding the utmost economy, the financial condition of the institution became greatly embarrassed. Although "the strictest account was made of every grain of corn, pint of milk, or pound of butter, the farm did not pay its way." Miss Bosanquet was greatly perplexed. She wrote, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit." She resolved to sell the establishment and live on twenty pounds a year till she could pay her debts.

She felt increasingly laid upon her heart the burden of souls. On account of her health she went to Horrowgate to drink the waters. While stopping at an inn the lodgers on Sunday requested her to address them in the "great ballroom." "This was a trial, indeed," she writes. "Yet, I considered, I shall see these people no more till I see them at the judgment seat of Christ; and shall it then be said of me, 'You might that day have warned us, but you would not?'" She therefore consented to the request, and had much comfort and "some fruit" of her labors.

Similar invitations were now frequently urged upon her. She dared not refuse them. On one occasion she rode twenty miles over the York-

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shire moors to address a meeting in the absence of the regular preacher. To her dismay she found two or three thousand persons assembled. The multitude filled a spacious quarry, from the edge of which she addressed them. The people seemed as if they could never have enough, and said, "When will you come again?"

This remarkable woman seems to have possessed singular ability for addressing an audience. "Her manner of speaking," writes Wesley, "is smooth, easy, and natural. Her words are as a fire, conveying both light and heat to the hearts of all that hear her." But her womanly sensitiveness shrank from the task. Of one occasion she writes: "All the day I kept pleading before the Lord, mostly in these words of Solomon, 'Ah, Lord, how shall I, who am but a child, go in and out before this, thy chosen people?'"

Mary Bosanquet was now to receive a new development of her character and a great increase of her joys. A kindred spirit, in every way worthy of her love, was to win her hand and heart. Rarely, if ever, have two more saintly souls been united in Christian wedlock than John Fletcher and Mary Bosanquet. On Fletcher's return from the Continent in 1781 he made the long-cherished object of his affection an offer of his hand. It was accepted, and at the mature

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age of fifty-two and forty-two respectively this long-waiting bridegroom and bride kept their honeymoon. In her devout thanksgiving the loving wife exclaims, "My cup runneth over." So well suited to each other were these pious souls that John Wesley was unwilling that they should have married otherwise than as they did.

The wealth of the bride was now at least no barrier to the long-delayed union. To pay her debts all her furniture, except a few trifles, had to be sold. "Deal would do for me," she writes, "as well as mahogany. I felt some attachment to my neat furniture; but love to the order of God made me take the spoiling of them very cheerfully." "I know no want but that of more grace," she adds. "My husband loves me as Christ loved the Church." "My wife," writes Fletcher, "is far better to me than the Church to Christ."

The following is Dr. Stevens's account of the married life of the generous-hearted John Fletcher:

"His charities to the poor continued to exhaust his income to the last. His wife, equally liberal, assures us that if he could find a handful of small silver when he was going out to see the sick he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would in discovering a bag of hidden treasure. He was hardly able to relish

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his dinner if some sick neighbors had not a part of it. On Sundays he provided for numbers of people who came from a distance to attend his ministrations; and his house, as well as his church, was devoted to their convenience.

"Being called upon by a poor man who feared God, but who was reduced to great difficulties, he took down all the pewter from the kitchen shelves, saying, 'This will help you, and I can do without it; a wooden trencher will serve me just as well.' During epidemic and contagious diseases, when others fled from the sick and dying, he flew to them, offering his services to watch them by night as well as by day."

The happy union of these twin souls was destined to be of short duration. Four short years passed away in labors more abundant for the glory of God. The zealous pastor established a day school and a Sunday school, and soon had three hundred children under religious instruction. The parish became a proverb for its piety, and the saintly influence which came from its humble vicarage was widely felt in quickening the spiritual life of the neighboring community.

But this blessed toil, for one of its laborers at least, was soon to cease. The health of Fletcher, long infirm, broke down. Yet, despite remonstrance, he continued his labors to the last, and

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died like a hero, at his post. On the last day of his public ministry he conducted a communion service of four hours' length. A divine unction rested upon the assembly. His wife intreated the dying man to desist, but he seemed to know it was the last time, and persisted in preaching and prayer. For several days he suffered much, but with continual praise upon his lips. "God is love! Shout! Shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" cried the dying man. When no longer able to speak he repeatedly, by signs and gestures, bore witness to his joy in the Lord. He died in 1785, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

"Many excellent men," said Wesley, "have I known, holy in heart and life, within four-score years; but one equal to him I have not known; one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God, so unblamable a man in every respect, I have not found either in Europe or America, nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity."

In the first outburst of her sorrow the bereaved widow was almost inconsolable. "The sun of my earthly joys forever set," she writes; "clouds and darkness surround both body and soul."

But faith rose triumphant over her fears, and

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for thirty years she continued to live her saintly life and maintain the influence of her noble husband. Her home at Madeley became a sanctuary to the poor, to devout women, and to the Methodist itinerants. It became, also, an important center of religious influence. In her own house and in the neighboring hamlets the Scripture expositions of this "widow indeed" were accompanied by striking results. The anniversaries of her marriage and of her husband's death were commemorated by holy exercises. On one of these occasions in loving remembrance she writes thus: "Twenty-eight years this day, and at this hour, I gave my hand and heart to Jean Guillaume de la Flechère—a profitable and blessed period of my life! I feel at this moment a more tender affection toward him than I did at that time, and by faith I now join my hands afresh with his."

Her labors were extremely exhausting, yet she sustained them as long as she had any strength. "I am very weak," she writes, "and yet am oft five times in a week able to be at my meetings, and I have strength to speak so that all may hear, and the Lord is very present with us." In her seventy-sixth year, and a few weeks before her death, she writes: "It is as if every meeting would take away my

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life, but I will speak to them while I have breath."

The last entry in her faithfully kept Journal is an aspiration to depart and be with Christ. "I seem very near death, but I long to fly into the arms of my beloved Lord." Soon after she entered into her eternal rest. Among her dying utterances were expressions of triumphant confidence: "There is my home and portion fair;" "He lifts his hands and shows that I am graven there." "The Lord bless both thee and me," she said to a friend who watched by her bedside, and insisted on her retiring to rest. Then, in the solemn silence of midnight, unattended in her dying hour by earthly ministrations, but accompanied by angelic spirits, her soul passed away from the travails and trials of earth to the raptures and triumphs of heaven.

Her whole life was a precious box of alabaster broken on the feet of the Lord she loved, the rich perfume of whose anointing is fragrant throughout the world to-day. In the profusion of her beneficence to others she practiced toward herself a rigorous self-denial. During the last year of her life her expenditure on her own apparel was less than twenty shillings. The same year her "poor account" amounted to over one hundred and eighty pounds. Her annual per-

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sonal expenditure on dress, for many years, never amounted to five pounds.

At her death, as at that of Dorcas, there was much weeping and lamentation, not only for the alms-deeds which she did, but for the loss of her spiritual ministrations.

For nearly one hundred years the *Life and Journal* of this sainted soul has been one of the classics of Methodist biography. Being dead, she yet speaks in many lands and in many tongues. She rests from her labors, and her works do follow her.

Intrepid and blessed spirit! may kindred zeal and devotion and impassioned love for souls never cease from among the women of Methodism till the Church of God, the Lamb's Wife, appear adorned as a bride for her husband, for the eternal blessedness of heaven!

## METHODISM IN THE NEW WORLD

### X

#### The Beginnings of Methodism in the New World

IN the providence of God times and places far from one another are often linked together by chains of sequence—by relations of cause and effect. The vast organization of Methodism throughout this entire continent, in this nineteenth century, has a definite relation to the vaulting ambition and persecuting bigotry of Louis XIV in the seventeenth century. That dissolute monarch was not sated with the atrocity and bloodshed caused by his infamous revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, whereby half a million of the best subjects of France became exiles forever and multitudes more became the victims of foulest outrage and wrong. He also twice ravaged the German Palatinate, a region now included in Bavaria, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Rhenish Prussia. In a few weeks the consummate tactician, Turenne, overran the country and gave to the flames and sack and pillage thirty thriving towns.

Unable to maintain his conquests against the resolute Protestant inhabitants and their allies, the “Grand Monarque” gave orders from his

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palace of Versailles for the utter devastation of the country. The inhuman orders were obeyed with atrocious fidelity. Eighty thousand men, trained in the art of slaughter, were let loose upon the hapless country, which they scourged with fire and sword. Heidelberg, Mannheim, Spires, Worms, Oppenheim, Bingen, and Baden, towns and cities of historic fame, with their venerable cathedrals, their stately palaces, and their homes of industry, together with many a humble hamlet and solitary farmstead, were given to the flames. In the bleak and bitter winter weather a hundred thousand houseless peasants—gray-haired sires, mothers, and helpless children—wandered about in abject misery.\*

Thousands of these wretched people took refuge within the lines of the English general, Marlborough, and sought the shelter of the British flag. More than six thousand came to London, reduced from affluence to poverty, and

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\* "The French commander announced to nearly one half million of human beings that he granted them three days of grace, and that within that time they must shift for themselves. Soon the roads and fields, which then lay deep in snow, were blackened by innumerable men, women, and children flying from their homes. Many died of cold and hunger, but enough survived to fill the streets of all the cities of Europe with lean and squalid beggars, who had once been thriving farmers and shopkeepers." The Elector Philip, looking from the walls of Mannheim, counted in one day no less than twenty-three towns and villages in flames. In Spires the brutal soldiery, as though to express their contempt for things most sacred, broke open the imperial vaults and scattered the ashes of the emperors. The whole valley of the Rhine, on both its banks, from Drachenfels to Philipsberg, was made the prey of the demon of rapine and destruction.

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were fed by public charity. Nearly three thousand were sent to the American colonies, and formed a valuable addition to the population of New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

A number, and with these we are at present more particularly interested, immigrated, under the auspices of the British government, to Ireland, and settled in the County of Limerick, near Rathkeale. In a contemporary list of these "Irish Palatines" occur the names, which afterward became so familiar in the United States and Canada, of Embury, Heck, Ruckle, Sweitzer, and others.

In the good Protestant soil of those hearts providentially prepared for the reception of the Gospel the seed of Methodism was early sown. Wesley's itinerant "helpers" penetrated to their humble hamlets, and these poor refugees received the word with gladness. When John Wesley, in 1758, passed through Ireland, preaching day and night, he records that such a settlement could hardly elsewhere be found in either Ireland or England. The Palatines had erected a large chapel. "There was no cursing or swearing, no Sabbath-breaking, no drunkenness, no alehouse among them."

They were a serious-thinking people, and their diligence had turned all their land into a garden. "How will these poor foreigners," he

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exclaims, “rise up in the day of judgment against those that are round about them!”

In this remarkable community was born, in the year 1734, the child destined to be the Mother of Methodism in the New World. The family seem to have been of respectable degree, and gave the name Ruckle Hill to the place of their residence in Balligarrene. Barbara Ruckle was nurtured in the fear of the Lord and in the practice of piety. She grew to womanhood fair in person, and adorned especially with those spiritual graces which constitute the truest beauty of character. In her eighteenth year she gave herself for life to the Church of her fathers and formally took upon her the vows of the Lord.

“From the beginning of her Christian life,” records her biographer, “her piety was of the purest and profoundest character. The Wesleyan doctrine of the witness of the Spirit was the inward personal test of piety among the Methodists of that day; and it was the daily criterion of the spiritual life of Barbara Heck. When, in extreme age, she was about to close her life-pilgrimage in the remote wilds of Canada, after assisting in the foundation of her Church in that province, as well as in the United States, she could say that she had never lost the evidence of her acceptance with God for twenty-

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four hours together from the day of her conversion."

In 1760, in the twenty-sixth year of her age, she was united in Christian wedlock to Paul



BARBARA HECK.

Heck, who is described as a devout member of the Teutonic community. Ireland then had scarce begun to send forth the swarms of her children who afterward swelled the population

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of the New World. Only her more adventurous spirits would brave the perils of the stormy deep and of the untried lands beyond the sea. It is therefore an indication of the energy of character of those Irish Palatines that about this time a little company of them resolved to try their fortunes on the continent of America.

"On a spring morning of 1760," writes one who was familiar with the local history of the Palatines, "a group of emigrants might have been seen at the customhouse quay, Limerick, preparing to embark for America. They were accompanied to the vessel's side by crowds of companions and friends, some of whom had come sixteen miles to say 'farewell.' One of those about to leave—a young man with a thoughtful look and resolute bearing—is evidently leader of the party. He had been one of the first fruits of his countrymen to Christ, the leader of the infant Church, and in their humble chapel had often ministered to them the word of life.

"And now the last prayer is offered; they embrace each other; the vessel begins to move. As she recedes uplifted hands and uplifted hearts attest what all felt. And none of all that vast multitude felt more, probably, than that young man. His name was Philip Embury. His party consisted of his wife, Mary Sweitzer (remarkable for her personal beauty, and re-

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cently married, at the early age of sixteen, to her noble husband), his two brothers and their families, Paul Heck and Barbara his wife, and others. Who among the crowd that saw them leave could have thought that two of the little band were destined, in the providence of God, to influence for good countless myriads, and that their names should live long as the sun and moon endure? Yet so it was. That vessel contained Philip Embury, the first class leader and local preacher of Methodism on the American continent, and Barbara Heck, 'a mother in Israel,' one of its first members, the germ from which, in the good providence of God, has sprung the Methodist Church of the United States [and Canada], a Church which has now under its influence about seven millions [now ten, at least] of the germinant mind of that new and teeming atmosphere!"

The sailing of the little vessel was all unheeded by the great world, which would have recked little had it foundered in the deep. But that frail bark was freighted with the seed of a glorious harvest which was destined to fill the whole land, the fruit whereof should shake like Lebanon. Those earnest souls, in the flush of youth and hope and love, carried with them the immortal leaven which was to leaven with its spiritual life a whole continent.

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After a weary voyage of many weeks the “destined vessel, richly freighted,” safely reached New York on the 10th of August, 1760. Amid the disappointments of hope deferred and the novel temptations by which they were surrounded, deprived, too, of the spiritual ministrations with which they had been favored in the old home, these humble Palatines appear to have sunk into religious apathy and despondency. Like the exiles of Babylon, they seemed to say, “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” Embury, for a time, lost his zeal, and, constitutionally diffident, shrank from the responsibility of religious leadership. While he justly ranks as the founder of American Methodism, Barbara Heck, as Dr. Stevens well remarks, may even take precedence over him as its foundress. She nourished, during all this time, her religious life by communion with God and by the devout reading of her old German Bible.

Five years later other Palatines, some of them relatives or old friends of the Emburys and Hecks, arrived at New York. Few of these were Wesleyans, and some made no profession of religion whatever. In the renewal of social intercourse between the old and new arrivals a game of cards was introduced. There is no evidence that any of the Wesleyans took part in this worldly amusement. But Barbara Heck

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felt that the time had come to speak out in earnest remonstrance against the spiritual declension of which she regarded this occupation as the evidence. In the spirit of an ancient prophetess she seized the cards and threw them into the fire, and solemnly warned the players of their danger and their duty.

Under a divine impulse she went straightway to the house of her cousin, Philip Embury, and appealed to him to be no longer silent, "entreating him with tears." With a keen sense of the spiritual danger of the little flock she exclaimed, "You must preach to us or we shall all go to hell together, and God will require our blood at your hands." "I cannot preach, for I have neither house nor congregation," he replied. Nevertheless, at her earnest adjuration he consented to preach in "his own hired house," and this mother in Israel sallied forth and collected four persons, who constituted his first audience. Its composition was typical of the diverse classes which the vast organization of which it was the germ was to embrace.

"Small as it was," says Dr. Stevens, "it included white and black, bond and free; while it was also an example of that lay ministration of religion which has extended the denomination in all quarters of the world, and of that agency of woman to which an inestimable pro-

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portion of the vitality and power of the Church is attributable. The name of Barbara Heck is first on the list; with her was her husband, Paul Heck; beside him sat John Lawrence, his ‘hired man,’ and by her side an African servant, called ‘Betty.’ Thus Methodism began its ministration among the poor and lowly, destined within a century to cover with its agencies a vast continent, and to establish its missions in every quarter of the globe.”

At the close of the first Methodist sermon ever preached in America Philip Embury organized his congregation into a class, which he continued to meet from week to week. The little company continued to increase, and soon grew too large for Philip Embury’s house. They hired a more commodious room, which was immediately crowded. “No small excitement,” says Dr. Stevens, “began quickly to prevail in the city on account of these meetings.” Philip Embury, toiling all the week for the bread that perisheth, continued from Sabbath to Sabbath to break unto the people the bread of life. As in the case of the great Preacher, “the common people heard him gladly.” He was one of themselves, and spoke to them of common needs and of a common Saviour, and their hearts responded warmly to his words.

One day the humble assembly was a good

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deal startled by the appearance among them of a military officer with scarlet coat, epaulets, and sword. The first impression was that he had come in the king's name to prohibit their meetings. They were soon agreeably undeceived.



CAPTAIN WEBB.

In the good and brave Captain Webb they found a firm friend and fellow-laborer in the Lord. He was one of Wesley's local preachers who, sent with his regiment to America, found out the New York Methodists and gladly cast in his lot with them. He soon took his stand at Embury's

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preaching desk, “with his sword on it by the side of the open Bible,” and declared to the people the word of life. The preaching of the soldier-saint roused the whole city and promoted at once the social prestige and religious prosperity of the humble church. For the ten years that he continued in America he was the chief founder of Methodism on the continent, preaching everywhere among the seaboard towns and villages. “The old soldier,” said President John Adams, “was one of the most eloquent men I ever heard.” He had the honor of introducing Methodism into the Quaker City, where to-day it is so powerful, as well as of planting it in many of the towns of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Long Island.

In 1767 the famous “Rigging Loft,” in William Street, was hired for the growing New York congregation; but “it could not,” says a contemporary writer, “contain half the people who desired to hear the word of the Lord.” The necessity for a larger place of worship became imperative, but where could this humble community obtain the means for its erection? Barbara Heck, full of faith, made it a subject of prayer, and received in her soul, with inexpressible assurance, the answer, “I, the Lord, will do it.” She proposed an economical plan for the erection of the church, which she believed

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to be a suggestion from God. It was adopted by the society, and "the first structure of the denomination in the western hemisphere," says Dr. Stevens, "was a monumental image of the humble thought of this devoted woman. Captain Webb entered heartily into the undertaking. It would probably not have been attempted without his aid. He subscribed thirty pounds toward it, the largest sum by one third given by one person."

The little Methodist community appealed to the public for assistance, and the subscription list is still preserved, representing all classes, from the mayor of the city down to the African female servants, designated only by their Christian names. A site on John Street, now in the very heart of the business portion of the city, surrounded by the banks of Wall Street and the palaces of Broadway, was procured, and a chapel of stone, faced with blue plaster, was in course of time erected. As dissenters were not allowed to erect "regular churches" in the city, in order to avoid the penalties of the law it was provided with a fireplace and chimney. Its interior, though long unfurnished, was described as "very neat and clean, and the floor sprinkled over with sand as white as snow." "Embry, being a skillful carpenter, wrought diligently upon this structure; and Barbara Heck, rejo-

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cing in the work of her hands, helped to whitewash its walls." "There were at first no stairs or breastwork to the gallery; it was reached by a rude ladder. The seats on the ground floor were plain benches without backs. Embury constructed with his own hands its pulpit; and on the memorable 30th of October, 1768, mounted the desk he had made and dedicated the humble temple to the worship of God. It received the name of 'Wesley Chapel,' and was the first in the world to receive that honored name."

Within two years we read of at least a thousand hearers crowding the chapel and the space in front. It has been more than once reconstructed since then, but a portion of the first building is still visible. A wooden clock, brought from Ireland by Philip Embury, still marks the hours of worship. Marble tablets on the walls commemorate the names and virtues of Barbara Heck and Embury, and of Asbury and Summerfield, faithful pastors, whose memory is still fragrant throughout the continent. This mother church of American Methodism will long continue to attract the footsteps of many a devout pilgrim to the birthplace of the Church of our fathers and of his own religious fellowship.

It is a somewhat remarkable coincidence that shortly after Embury had introduced Methodism into New York another Irish local preacher,

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Robert Strawbridge by name, was the means of its introduction into the province of Maryland. Like Embury, he preached first in his own house, and afterward in a humble "log meeting-house," the prototype of thousands such which were destined to rise as golden candlesticks amid the moral darkness all over this vast continent.

Methodism having been established by lay agency in the largest city in the New World, it was destined to be planted by the same means in the waste places of the country. John Wesley, at the solicitation of Captain Webb and other Methodists in America, had sent from England as missionaries to carry on the good work begun in New York, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, the pioneers of an army of twenty thousand Methodist preachers on this continent. To these Philip Embury readily gave up his pulpit, and shortly after, in 1770, removed with his family, together with Paul and Barbara Heck and other Palatine Methodists, to Salem, Washington County, New York, near Lake Champlain.

This now flourishing and populous part of the country was then a wilderness. But under these changed conditions those godly pioneers ceased not to prosecute their providential mission—the founding of Methodism in the New World. Embury continued his labors as a faithful local preacher, and soon among the scattered popula-

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tion of settlers was formed a "class," the first within the bounds of the Troy Conference, which has since multiplied to two hundred and eighty-eight preachers and forty-nine thousand members.

Embry seems to have won the confidence and esteem of his rural neighbors no less for his practical business efficiency and sound judgment than for his sterling piety, as we find him officiating as magistrate as well as preacher.

He received, while mowing in his field in the summer of 1775, so severe an injury that he died suddenly, at the early age of forty-five. "He was," writes Asbury, who knew him well, "greatly beloved and much lamented." He was buried, after the manner of the primitive settlers, on the farm on which he had lived and labored. "After reposing," writes Dr. Stevens, "fifty-seven years in his solitary grave without a memorial his remains were disinterred with solemn ceremonies, and borne by a large procession to the Ashgrove burial ground, where their resting place is marked by a monument recording that he 'was the first to set in motion a train of measures which resulted in the founding of the John Street Church, the cradle of American Methodism, and the introduction of a system which has beautified the earth with salvation and increased the joys of heaven.'"

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On the outbreak of the Revolutionary War many of the loyal Palatines maintained their allegiance to the old flag by removing to Lower Canada. Here they remained for ten years, chiefly in Montreal. In 1785 a number of them removed to Upper Canada, then newly organized as a province, and settled in the township of Augusta, on the river St. Lawrence. Among these were John Lawrence and Catharine, his wife, who was the widow of Philip Embury; Paul and Barbara Heck, and other Palatine Methodists. True to their providential mission, they became the founders and pioneers of Methodism in Canada, as they had been in the United States. A "class" was forthwith organized, of which Samuel Embury, walking in the footsteps of his sainted father, was the first leader. Thus, six years before the advent into Canada of William Losee, the first regular Methodist preacher who entered the country, Methodism was already organized through the energies of those honored lay agents.

Barbara Heck died at the residence of her son, Samuel Heck, in 1804, aged seventy years. "Her death," writes Dr. Stevens, "was befitting her life; her old German Bible, the guide of her youth in Ireland, her resource during the falling away of her people in New York, her inseparable companion in all her wanderings in the

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wildernesses of northern New York and Canada, was her oracle and comfort to the last. She was found sitting in her chair, dead, with the well-used and endeared volume open on her lap. Thus passed away this devoted, obscure, and unpretentious woman who so faithfully, yet unconsciously, laid the foundations of one of the grandest ecclesiastical structures of modern ages, and whose name shall shine with ever-increasing brightness as long as the sun and moon endure."

In the old "Blue Church" graveyard, on the banks of the majestic St. Lawrence, slumbers the dust of the founders and of many of the pioneers of Methodism in Canada. The spot takes its name from an ancient church, now demolished, which once wore a coat of blue paint. Thither devout men, amid the tears of neighbors and friends, bore the remains of Paul Heck and of Barbara his wife. Here, too, slumbers the dust of the beautiful Catharine Sweitzer, who in her early youth gave her heart to God and her hand to Philip Embury, and for love's sweet sake braved the perils of the stormy deep and the privations of pioneer life in the New World. Here sleep, also, till the resurrection trump awake them, the bodies of several of the early Palatine Methodists and of many of their descendants, who, by their patient toil, their

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earnest faith, their fervent zeal, have helped to lay the foundations of Methodism on this continent.

As we contemplate the lowly life of this true mother in Israel, and the marvelous results of which she was the initiating cause, we cannot help exclaiming in devout wonder and thanksgiving, "What hath God wrought!" In the United States and Canada there is at this moment, as the outgrowth of seed sown in weakness over a century ago, a great church organization, like a vast banyan tree, overspreading the continent, beneath whose broad canopy ten millions of souls, as members or adherents, enroll themselves by the name of Methodists, and go in and out and find spiritual pasture. The solitary testimony of Philip Embury has been succeeded by that of a great army of twenty thousand local preachers and nearly as many ordained ministers. Over two hundred Methodist colleges and academies unite in hallowed wedlock the principles of sound learning and vital godliness. Nearly half a hundred newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals, together with a whole library of books of Methodist authorship, scatter broadcast throughout the land the religious teachings of which those lowly Palatines were the first representatives in the New World.

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The Methodists of the United States worthily honored the memory of Barbara Heck by the erection of a memorial building in connection with the Garrett Biblical Institute, at Evanston, Ill.—itself the gift of a noble-minded American woman—to be known forever as Heck Hall. Thus do two devout women, one the heir of lowly toil, the other the daughter of luxury and wealth, join hands across the century, and their names and virtues are commemorated not by a costly but useless pillared monument, but by a “home for the sons of the prophets, the Philip Emburys of the coming century, while pursuing their sacred studies.”

“Barbara Heck,” writes Bishop Fowler in commemorating this event, “put her brave soul against the rugged possibilities of the future, and throbbed into existence American Methodism. The leaven of her grace has leavened a continent. The seed of her piety has grown into a tree so immense that a whole flock of commonwealths come and lodge in the branches thereof, and its mellow fruits drop into a million homes. To have planted American Methodism; to have watered it with holy tears; to have watched and nourished it with the tender, sleepless love of a mother and the pious devotion of a saint; to have called out the first minister, convened the first congregation, met the first class, and planned

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the first Methodist church edifice, and to have secured its completion, is to have merited a monument as enduring as American institutions, and, in the order of Providence, it has received a monument which the years cannot crumble as enduring as the Church of God. The life work of Barbara Heck finds its counterpart in the living energies of the Church she founded."

Canadian Methodism has not been unmindful of its obligation to this sainted woman, and is erecting as a perpetual memorial a Barbara Heck Woman's Residence in connection with Victoria University, Toronto.

## XI

**Dr. Coke, the Father of Methodist Missions**

THE special characteristic of Methodism is its missionary zeal. It obeys the exhortation of its founder, to go not only to those who need it, but to those who need it most. It delights to remember the forgotten, to succor the neglected, to seek out the forsaken. As if prescient of the destined universality of the Church which he planted, John Wesley with prophetic soul exclaimed, "The world is my parish."

On many a field of sacred toil have the ministers of the Methodist Church vindicated its distinction of being preeminently a missionary Church—amid the cinnamon groves of Ceylon, in the crowded bazars or tangled jungles of India, among the teeming populations of China, in sunny islands of the Southern Seas, in the Zulu's hut and the Kaffir's kraal, and amid the strongholds of heathen savagery. With a prouder boast than the Roman poet they may exclaim, "What region in the world is not full of our labor?" In every land beneath the sun this grand old mother of Churches has her daughters, fair and flourishing, who rise up and

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call her blessed. The Sabbath chant of her hymns engirdles the earth with an anthem of praise, and the sheen of her spires rejoices in the light of a ceaseless morning.



THE REV. DR. THOMAS COKE,  
Father of Methodist Missions.

To no man does Methodism owe more its missionary character than to the Rev. Thomas Coke, D.C.L. This marvelous man, of puny form but

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of giant energy, with a burning zeal kindled at the altar of eternal truth—like the angel of the Apocalypse, flying abroad under the whole heaven with the everlasting Gospel—preached the glad evangel of God's grace in both hemispheres, became the founder of Wesleyan missions in the East and West Indies, and the first bishop of the American Methodism—a Church now boundless as the continent. After crossing eighteen times the stormy sea he was at last buried in its depths, whose waters, like his influence, encompass the world. The study of this heroic life will be fruitful at once in lessons of gratitude to God, of inspiration to duty, and of zeal in the service of the divine Master.

Nestling in the soft valley of the Usk, surrounded by the towering mountains of Wales, lies the old ecclesiastical borough of Brecon, the site of an ancient Dominican priory, whose ivy-mantled walls form one of the most picturesque ruins in Britain. In the oak-roofed, time-stained town hall of the ancient borough, at the middle of the last century, might have been seen, arrayed in the robes and insignia of office, a worthy alderman dispensing justice to the rural litigants of the neighborhood. This was the chief magistrate of Brecon and the father of Thomas Coke.

The future apostle of Methodism, unlike many

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of its early ministers, was the heir of a large patrimony. He was born three years before the middle of the century (1747), and spent his early years amid the romantic surroundings of "Usk and Camelot," the scene of the legendary exploits of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. In his sixteenth year he was registered as gentleman-commoner at Jesus College, Oxford. Among his college associates were the future Lord Eldon, Chancellor of England, who always retained for him a warm friendship; William Jones, who became the first orientalist of his age; Wharton, the historian of British poetry; and the future bishops, Horne and Kennicott.

The handsome young patrician student was not proof against the seductions of Oxford society. He unhappily fell into evil habits, and even became infected with the infidel principles which were then too much in vogue at the university. But a divine restraint and guidance prevented him from forsaking his hereditary faith and confirmed him in, at least, an intellectual apprehension of the truths of Christianity, although, as yet, he knew not by experience their saving power. He completed his college course with distinction, and shortly after his coming of age was elected to the chief magistracy of his native town. But, yearning to live

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a life of Christian service, he entered holy orders in the humble rank of a village curate. Yet his heart was ill at ease, for he felt that the Saviour whom he was called to preach was to himself unknown.

Still, his moral earnestness awakened much interest in his parish. His church became crowded, and to accommodate the increased congregation he erected a gallery at his own expense. During this time he made the acquaintance of Thomas Maxfield, Wesley's first lay preacher, and by him was led to more spiritual views of religion. He became increasingly diligent in the discharge of parish duty. He met one day in his pastoral visitation a humble Methodist farm laborer who, unlettered in the lore of the schools, was wise in the knowledge of God. From this rustic teacher the Oxford scholar gained a clearer acquaintance with the way of salvation by faith than from the learned divines and bishops of the first university of Europe.

The zeal of the popular curate soon began to exceed the bounds of clerical decorum, as regarded in the Church established by law. He preached with increasing fervor, and without the "regulation manuscript." He held special services out of church hours on Sunday, and on week evenings, in remote parts of his parish. He introduced the singing of the soul-stirring

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hymns of Watts and Wesley. He was no longer the easy-going, card-playing parson of his early incumbency, but a “dangerous fanatic,” righteous overmuch, and, in fact, infected with the pestilent heresy of Methodism, whose Arminian doctrines of free grace he proclaimed from the parish pulpit.

The overearnest curate was soon dismissed by his rector, admonished for his “irregularities” by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and expelled from his church. His churchly notions were still so exalted that, after a long and profitable correspondence with a dissenting minister, when invited to a personal interview he would only consent to its taking place under the neutral ground of a neighbor’s house, his scruples preventing him visiting a dissenter or meeting one under his own roof. To receive himself the obnoxious brand of a Methodist was therefore particularly distasteful. He had just obtained his highest academical degree—that of Doctor of Civil Law. Church preferment was proffered him by a nobleman of powerful influence. But the authority of conscience was supreme, and he faltered not for a moment in his loyalty to the convictions of his soul. Neither worldly hopes nor ignoble fears could make him swerve from what he deemed the path of duty.

A personal interview with John Wesley con-

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vinced Dr. Coke that for scholarship and saintliness the despised Methodists possessed the very paragon of clergymen. Mr. Wesley thus records his impressions of the young Doctor of Law: "I had much conversation with him, and a union then began which, I trust, shall never end."

The zealous curate soon experienced the brunt of persecution. The sentence of his expulsion from the parish church was abruptly announced at the close of the morning service in the presence of the congregation. By a pre-concerted scheme, as he passed out of the door the bells rang out a dissonant peal—a sort of ecclesiastical "rogue's march"—by way of valediction to the expelled pastor. Cider barrels were broached, and a general rejoicing at his expulsion took place. To a man of his keen sensitiveness and churchly sympathies the indignity must have been poignant in the extreme.

But the expelled pastor could not be restrained from proclaiming the message of salvation. The next Sunday he preached in the street near the church, immediately after the morning service, and announced that he would preach again the following Sunday. He was warned that it would be at the peril of his life if he did. "To render these menaces more significant," says

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his biographer, "sundry hampers of stones were brought to the spot, like a park of artillery drawn up on a field marked out for battle."

But the little doctor, with that heroic courage which characterized him to the end of his life, was not to be daunted by brute force. He was sustained, also, by the presence of friends, who stood by him in this hour of peril. Among these were a Miss Edmunds and her brother, whose hearts had been touched by the earnest preaching of the persecuted pastor. The brave girl stood on one side of him and the brother on the other. Their undaunted bearing cowed the craven spirits of the mob, who shrank from their intended assault and possible murder; and, like Paul before Felix, the feeble unarmed man spoke words of power which made his persecutors tremble.

Notwithstanding this rude initiation into his life work, Dr. Coke not for a moment hesitated in his purpose. He resolved to cast in his lot with the despised and persecuted Methodists and to espouse the toils and hardships of an itinerant preacher. He therefore, in 1777, made application to Mr. Wesley for admission to the Conference. That judicious man did not at once grant his request, but gave him time for consideration, while he made him the companion of his journeys and the sharer of his labors.

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Dr. Coke visited the Bristol Conference, and his desire to be numbered with those godly men in the work of spreading "scriptural holiness" throughout the land became more intense. Wesley yielded to his wish, and wrote in his Journal: "I went to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who has bidden adieu to his honorable name and determined to cast in his lot with us."

He was soon preaching in the old Foundry, London, at Seven Dials, and to immense multitudes of eager listeners in the public squares. Providence was opening for him a wider career than addressing a few rustics in an obscure hamlet. He was soon to become a mighty missionary organizer, whose influence was to be felt on earth's remotest shores and to the end of time.

Wesley was now bowed beneath the weight of eighty years. The care of all the churches and his vast correspondence was a burden which he gladly shared with this energetic son in the Gospel, now in the vigor of his thirtieth year. He used to say that Dr. Coke was his right hand.

The zealous preaching of the young evangelist often provoked the attacks of mobs. As he stood in the public square of Ramsbury, Wiltshire, he was assailed with sticks and stones, and his gown torn to shreds. The vicar of the

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parish, who headed the riot, bethought him of a more ingenious expedient. "Bring out the fire engines!" he shouted; and the preacher and congregation were soon dispersed by a few volleys of "liquid artillery." It was noticed, as a remarkable coincidence, that within a fortnight that very engine proved powerless to suppress a fire which destroyed a great part of the village.

In the course of his itinerations Dr. Coke revisited his former parish, from which he had been heartlessly expelled. The simple rustics found that they had lost their best friend, and welcomed him back with joy. The bells that rang him out chimed merrily at his return. He preached to two thousand people, who flocked to hear him from all the neighboring villages, and wept over them as the Saviour wept over Jerusalem. From that day the despised Methodists had a foothold in the parish, and soon after the doctor had the pleasure of building a Methodist chapel where he had been cast out of the Established Church.

In his somewhat impulsive zeal Dr. Coke arraigned Joseph Benson and Samuel Bradburn, first by correspondence and then before the Conference, for a presumed tinge of Arian heresy. Their orthodoxy being vindicated, the doctor asked permission to beg pardon publicly for his

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offense, and thus make public amends for the wrong he had done.

In the celebrated Deed of Declaration Mr. Wesley vested in the "Legal Hundred" all the authority of the Connection. Dr. Coke was accused of influencing the choice of this "centurion band." Mr. Wesley, however, completely exculpated him by the laconic defense, "*Non vult, non potuit*—he would not if he could, he could not if he would"—and assumed the personal responsibility of the choice.

Dr. Coke was soon to enter on what might be called his foreign missionary work. On the second day of September, 1784, John Wesley, feeling himself providentially called of God thereto, solemnly set apart by imposition of hands Dr. Thomas Coke to be superintendent of the Methodist societies in America. Into the controversy to which that act gave rise we shall not enter. In our sketch of Francis Asbury we have given Mr. Wesley's own account of the transaction. Suffice it to say that the extraordinary development of American Methodism, under episcopal jurisdiction, seems a providential vindication of his procedure.

In three weeks Coke, with his companions, Whatcoat and Vesey, was on his way to America. The voyage was stormy and tedious, but he redeemed the time by study. He refreshed

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his classic lore by reading Virgil in a little nook between decks, and remarks in his Journal, "I can say in a much better sense than he—

‘Deus nobis haec otia fecit,  
Namque erit ille mihi semper Deus.’”\*

He labored zealously for the conversion of the sailors on shipboard, and believed that God had given him at least one soul as his reward.

"I want," he wrote, "the wings of an eagle and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the Gospel through the east and the west, the north and the south"—a prophecy of his future life work.

He forthwith began ranging through the continent from Massachusetts to Georgia, a true bishop of souls, feeding the flock scattered through a primeval wilderness. Not unfrequently was he exposed to the perils of fording swollen rivers or crossing rugged mountains. Some of his escapes from danger were very narrow. He met with prejudice and opposition in the Western wilds as well as in an English parish, and records being excluded from a dilapidated church to which, nevertheless, cattle and hogs had free access.

He preferred the rugged grandeur of the Blue

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\* "God has provided for us these hours of retirement, and he shall be my God forever."

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Ridge Mountains to any part of America; it was so much like his native Wales. He bore his testimony boldly against the sin of slavery, and provoked thereby much persecution. One lady offered a mob £50 if they "would give the little doctor a hundred lashes." Many emancipated their slaves, but others became more virulent in their opposition. In company with Asbury he visited General Washington at Mount Vernon, to seek his influence in favor of Negro emancipation. But their Master's business requiring haste, they could not accept an invitation to lodge under the presidential roof. During this seven-months' visit Dr. Coke greatly consolidated and strengthened American Methodism and laid the foundation of Cokesbury College, the pioneer of its grand educational system.

The importance of foreign missions was not then felt in the Churches of Christendom. When Carey, at a meeting of ministers, urged the duty of giving the Gospel to the heathen, the president exclaimed, "Sit down, young man; sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen he will do it without your aid or mine."

But already Coke was meditating the vast missionary enterprises which are the glory of the Methodist Church. He opened a correspondence with India and America, and visited the Channel Islands as a key to missionary operations in

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France. The first field for the extension of the Gospel, however, that seemed indicated by Providence was Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Canada. Thither, in 1768, Dr. Coke and three fellow-preachers were sent by the English Conference.

The voyage lasted thirteen weeks, and was almost one continued tempest. The sails were rent, the timbers strained, and, half a wreck, the vessel sprung a leak, and, falling on her beam ends, threatened instant death to all on board. The superstitious captain, attributing his disasters to the presence of the blackcoats, exclaimed, "There is a Jonah on board; a Jonah on board!" Rushing to Dr. Coke's cabin, he threw into the sea his books and papers, and, seizing the diminutive doctor, threatened to throw him after them if he were caught praying again. The passengers were put on short rations, and, worst of all, the doctor thought, the supply of candles gave out, so that his hours of study were curtailed. He solaced himself, till he lost his books, with reading French, Virgil, and "every day a canto of the English Virgil, Spenser." "With such company," he continues, "I could live comfortably in a tub."

The project of reaching Halifax had to be abandoned, and running before the storm, they made, on Christmas Day, the port of Antigua,

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in the West Indies. It was, indeed, a happy day for the sable myriads of those islands, for it brought them a glad evangel of redemption—of peace on earth and good will to men. As Dr. Coke walked up the street of the town he met a ship carpenter and local preacher, John Baxter by name, who had under his care a Methodist society of nearly two thousand souls, all blacks but ten.

How came this native church in this far-off tropic isle? Twenty-eight years before an Antigua planter, Nathaniel Gilbert, heard John Wesley preach at Wandsworth, in England. The good seed took root in his heart, and he brought the precious germs to his island home, where they became the source of West India Methodism. This, in turn, was one of the chief means of Negro emancipation and the beginning of the great movement of African evangelization. On the death of Nathaniel Gilbert a pious shipwright took charge of the native church, which eight years later was found so flourishing.

Dr. Coke ranged from island to island, sowing the seed of the kingdom in the good ground of those faithful African hearts. On every side he found evidence of the quickening power of the leaven of Methodism conveyed by strange means to those scattered islands—by converted soldiers or sailors, by pious freed Negroes, and at

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St. Eustatius by a fugitive slave, whose ministry was a marvel of spiritual success. Under the preaching of the black apostle many of his hearers fell down, like dead men, to the earth, and multitudes were converted from their fetich worship to an intelligent piety.

The Dutch officials of the island, however, scourged and imprisoned Black Harry, and passed an edict inflicting thirty-nine lashes on any Negro found praying. With a fidelity worthy of the martyr ages these sable confessors continued steadfast amid these cruel persecutions. Dr. Coke subsequently interceded at the court of Holland for the religious liberty of the blacks, but, for the time, in vain. Yet he lived to see St. Eustatius a flourishing Wesleyan mission, and, ten years after, met Black Harry a freed and happy man.

Again and again the indefatigable evangelist revisited those sunny islands, which seem to have possessed a strange fascination to his soul. And well they might, for nowhere has missionary success been more glorious. At Barbadoes an Irish soldier recognized one of the missionaries as his old pastor, and, in a transport of delight, threw his arms about his neck. At Jamaica Dr. Coke received some insults from a number of drunken "gentlemen," but persisted in his apostolic labor of preaching the Gospel.

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Persecution here, as elsewhere, fostered the growth of the Church. The chapel was attacked by a mob, the Bible hanged to a gibbet, and the Methodists hooted at by the nickname of "hal-le-lujah" in the street. In Bermuda John Stephenson, for preaching the Gospel to Negroes, was imprisoned for six months and fined £50.

Soon the work of evangelization was extended to Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts, Nevis, the Bahamas, the Carib Islands, Hayti, and the Bermudas. Amid privations, pestilence, shipwrecks, and sometimes bitter persecution the missionaries toiled on till a free Christian civilization took the place of slavery, superstition, cruelty, and barbarism. As a result of the work thus inauspiciously begun Methodism now numbers in those islands over a score of missionaries and over twenty thousand members.

Dr. Coke was in America when he heard of the death of John Wesley. Overwhelmed with sorrow, he hastened home to England. He was soon associated with Henry Moore in the preparation of a life of the patriarch of Methodism. An edition of ten thousand was published, and in two months cleared a profit of £1,700.

The French Revolution and the fall of the Bastile inspired a hope that in France the barriers to the Gospel had been broken down. Dr. Coke and M. De Queteville, a Guernsey Meth-

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dist, proceeded to Paris to open, if possible, a mission. In that city of amusements and pleasures, where, as one of its own wits has said, four fifths of the people die of grief,\* they could only get a congregation of six persons, and were warned to depart or they would be hanged on a lamp-post. They felt that the opportunity for the evangelization of France had not yet come.

Dr. Coke had been requested by the English Conference to prepare a commentary on the Holy Scriptures. On his fifth voyage to America he devoted himself with energy to the task. "I find a ship a most convenient place for study," is his rather exceptional experience, "although," he adds, "it is sometimes a great exercise for my feet, legs, and arms to keep myself steady to write." Proceeding from New York to St. Eustatius, in company with the sainted "Bishop" Black, of Nova Scotia, he found the vessel exceedingly loathsome from the filthy habits of the crew, yet he was able, he said, to become a contented Hottentot, and the consolations of God superabounded.

He found the Methodist missionary in jail for preaching the Gospel, and Negro women publicly flogged for attending prayer meeting. The penalty for the second and third offense of

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\* "Paris, ville d'amusemens, des plaisirs, où les quatre cinquièmes des habitans mourrent de chagrin."—Chamfort, *Caractères et Anecdotes*.

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preaching was banishment or death, but the imprisoned missionary still preached through his grated windows to the Negroes without, who listened with tears flowing down their cheeks. The doctor might well denounce these cruel edicts as rivaling those of the pagan emperors of Rome. He zealously interceded with the Dutch and English governments for the repeal of these infamous laws, and eventually with success.

In Jamaica he preached the first sermon ever heard in the town of Falmouth, although it had for years a parochial clergyman, with a handsome stipend. As he declared the necessity of the new birth a sea captain exclaimed, "Sir, if what you say be true, we must all be damned. I don't like your doctrine at all," and the sermon was continued amid tumult and confusion. While on his return to England Coke's ship was chased by a French privateer, but was rescued by the appearance of Lord Hood's fleet.

The publication of Wilberforce's evidence concerning the African slave trade was to the heart of Dr. Coke an appalling revelation of the horrors of that "sum of all villanies." He therefore, in his yearning pity for the dark continent of Africa, projected a mission colony to that unhappy country, then seldom sought but for purposes of cruelty and crime. The expedi-

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tion sailed for Sierra Leone in 1796, but, although the pioneer of successful missions, it was itself a failure.

The same year he again embarked to attend the General Conference at Baltimore. Traveling nowadays has lost much of the adventure and peril and discomfort it had in the last century. Dr. Coke describes the ship as a “floating hell,” and his ill-treatment by the captain as too infamous to describe. He believed that the tyrant wished to cause his death out of hatred to Methodism. With a single shirt in his pocket, and refused the request for a little bread and pork, although he had paid eighteen guineas for his passage, Dr. Coke left the vessel in Chesapeake Bay in a small schooner, on whose bare deck he slept all night.

With much privation and vexatious delays, traveling by boat, on horseback, or on foot, he reached Baltimore just in time for the Conference. On the way he was joined by a Methodist preacher from beyond the Alleghanies, who had been lost for sixteen days in crossing the mountains. His horse had perished, and he himself had nearly died of hunger. Such were some of the episodes of the itinerancy a century ago.

On Coke’s succeeding voyage the vessel was captured by a French privateer and confiscated,

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with all the doctor's baggage except his private papers. He was landed at Porto Rico with scarcely raiment enough for his personal necessities, but escaped the horrors of a French prison, and at length found his way to Conference "on a borrowed horse, with a great boy riding behind him."

During the terrible insurrection of 1798 in Ireland Dr. Coke was in that distracted country, frequently exposed to personal peril, but providentially protected. It was a Methodist class leader in Dublin who gave warning of the outbreak, and thus saved the capital from capture and pillage by the insurgents. The horrors of this civil war, for such it was, can never be fully recorded. A French invasion was invited by the rebels and attempted under General Humbert. Beacon lights flashed the signal of the rising from peak to peak. The houses of many Protestants were burned, their cattle harried, and multitudes of noncombatant men, women, and children were cruelly massacred. Bands of armed ruffians, maddened with whisky and fanaticism, ravaged the country with fire and sword. Thirty-seven thousand of the marauders encamped near Ross, and the next day seven thousand were slain in a conflict with the king's troops.

The Methodists, especially the itinerant

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preachers, were, for their loyalty, particularly obnoxious to the rebels, and several were cruelly piked with aggravated barbarity. During this reign of terror the Irish Conference met, through the influence of Dr. Coke with the lord lieutenant, in the city of Dublin. "O God, shorten the day of our calamity," he wrote, "or no flesh can be saved." With the magnanimity of a Gospel revenge that very Conference set apart Charles Graham and James McQuigg as Irish evangelists, who, subsequently joined by Gideon Ouseley, preached and prayed and sang the Gospel in the Irish tongue into the hearts of thousands of their fellow-countrymen. Dr. Coke it was who proposed the measure, pledged its pecuniary support, and obtained for the missionaries the protection of the military authorities.

Soon after he organized the missions among his Welsh fellow-countrymen, and had the happiness of seeing multitudes thereby brought to a knowledge of the truth. Two years later he formed a plan for the home missions which have carried Methodism to the remotest hamlets of the island, and eight men were designated to destitute parts of England unreached by the regular circuits.

Two continents were now contending in friendly rivalry for the services of this modern apostle. Alternately president of the English

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and of the American Conference, his presence seemed so manifestly needed in both countries that he was continually crossing the ocean on his missionary voyages, as if either hemisphere were too narrow for his energies. At last the American General Conference of 1800 yielded to the request of the British Conference to allow Dr. Coke to remain in England.

"We have, in compliance with your request," it wrote, "lent the doctor to you for a season, to return to us as soon as he conveniently can, but at furthest by the meeting of the next General Conference." Only once more was he permitted to visit his American brethren, to whom he was endeared by most sacred ties, and who mourned his death as that of the "greatest man of the eighteenth century."

Amid the many wanderings of his active life Dr. Coke found leisure for much literary work, as even the busiest may do if he will only improve his spare hours—the *horæ subsecivæ* which many think not worth saving. Among his useful writings are his *History of the West Indies*, in three volumes, octavo; five volumes of records of his missionary journeys; a history of philosophy, and numerous occasional pamphlets, sermons, and the like.

His great work, however, was his *Commentary on the Scriptures*, begun by request of the British

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Conference in 1798, and finished, after nine years' labor, in 1807. It reached the somewhat portentous size of six quarto volumes, splendidly printed on the University Press. The book, however, was not a success. It was probably too costly for the times, and was superseded by the more popular work of Dr. Adam Clarke. Disappointed at its failure, he offered the entire edition, worth at trade price £10,000, to the Conference for £3,000. This offer was accepted, and he bade farewell to literature for the more congenial field of missionary toil.

With zeal redoubled as the years fled by, he traversed Great Britain from end to end on behalf of his Irish, Welsh, and home mission enterprises. He threw himself with vigor into the then novel work of promoting Sunday schools and the temperance reform. The spiritual necessities of the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain—of whose trials and temptations, virtues and vices, he had seen so much during his wanderings—lay like a burden on his heart.

At length, in 1804, a Methodist missionary and his wife were sent to the Rock of Gibraltar. They were well-nigh wrecked in the Bay of Biscay and driven to the Barbary coast. Reaching at last their destination, it yielded them only the asylum of a grave; yellow fever wasted the

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little community, and the missionary and his wife soon fell victims to its power. An infant daughter survived, who, adopted into the family of Dr. Adam Clarke, became the wife of a Methodist minister and the mother of the distinguished Dr. James H. Rigg, twice president of the Wesleyan Conference. But the historic rock was not abandoned; and a succession of faithful missionaries have ministered to the wants, temporal and spiritual, of multitudes of England's redcoats quartered at Gibraltar.

The unhappy condition of the French sailors and soldiers pent up in the prison-ships of the great naval depots also appealed strongly to that loving heart whose sympathies were as wide as the world. In the Medway alone was a prison population of two thousand, and altogether in England not less than sixty thousand crowded into unventilated and often infected ships. Sometimes the friendless, hopeless, and often half-naked wretches sought escape from their despondency by suicide.

The Rev. William Toase, the father of French Methodist missions, gained admission to the hulk *Glory*, and preached to the prisoners in their own language till forbidden by the commissary. Dr. Coke thereupon appealed to the Earl of Liverpool and obtained permission to have preaching at all the naval stations, with

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characteristic generosity meeting the enlarged expenditure himself.

Through this exhibition of love to enemies many French prisoners—some of noble rank—carried back to their native land not only kindly recollections of their “hereditary foe,” but Christian fellowship in that kingdom which embraces all races of men. William Toase had also the honor of planting in France that Methodist Church which has survived the overthrow of successive dynasties and is contributing greatly to the moral regeneration of that lovely land.

At length Dr. Coke was permitted to see the successful inauguration of an African mission—the precursor of subsequent moral victories among the Kaffirs, Hottentots, Fingoes, Bechuanas, Zulus, and other tribes of the Dark Continent. On the abolition of the slave trade England established in Sierra Leone the colony of Freetown as an asylum for stolen Negroes rescued from recaptured slave ships. Hither, in 1811, four volunteer missionaries were sent. Notwithstanding the more than decimation of the missionary ranks by the deadly climate, the work has been maintained till in thirty chapels assemble more than twenty thousand native Methodists who have abandoned their vile fetishism for a pure spiritual worship, and five thousand children crowd the mission schools.

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We now approach a romantic episode in the already venerable missionary's history. The flower of love, like the night-blooming cereus, blossomed late in his life; but its beauty and fragrance were all the more grateful to his lonely heart. He was in his fifty-eighth year. His brow was bronzed by eighteen transatlantic voyages and by sojourn beneath the tropic sun, and his once raven hair was silvered by time. In his busy life he had never found leisure for courtship and marriage. But now, in its quiet eventide, he found the solace of communion with a kindred spirit in the tenderest and most sacred of earthly relationships.

The growing claims of the vast and increasing missionary enterprises of the Church called for active efforts for their support. Dr. Coke not only exhausted his own large patrimony in their aid, but "toiled," says his biographer, "from day to day like a common mendicant." While at Bristol on a begging tour he was introduced to a Methodist lady of large fortune, who subscribed for his mission two hundred guineas. The generous gift led to an acquaintance which in time resulted in the union of their hearts and lives and fortunes and interests for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. "Unto thee, O God," wrote the lady on her wedding day, "we give up our whole lives—

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all we have and all we are—to thee wholly and entirely."

But marriage made no change in the soul-absorbing pursuits of the zealous missionary organizer. He seemed to feel that the time was short, and it remained that they that have wives be as though they had none. He continued to travel, preach, write, and beg with unintermitting energy. His devoted helpmate was not long permitted to aid with her love, her sympathy, and her fortune her noble husband. After six years of married life he was again left alone in the world.

His heart, sore stricken by her loss, having tasted the solace of domestic happiness, again sought an aftermath of joy in a second marriage. But in a few days from the anniversary of the wedding day he was again left solitary.

"With the presage," writes his biographer, "that these bereavements had been designed to leave him the more untrammeled for the tasks that might remain, he dedicated himself afresh to God alone. Henceforth he would think, preach, write, labor, and pray more fully than ever for one object—the extension of Christ's kingdom among men."

And faithfully he performed his vow. He was now about to inaugurate his last and greatest missionary enterprise. For many years the

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spiritual destitution of India had lain heavy on his heart. On the banks of the Indus, where the foot of an Alexander had faltered, a merchant's clerk had conquered an empire. With three thousand troops on the plain of Plassey Clive had routed an army of sixty thousand, with the loss of only two and twenty men, and laid the foundations of Britain's Indian empire of two hundred and fifty million souls.

Though open to English commerce, India, by the decree of the company, was closed to Christ's Gospel. But India still "cleaved" to his heart; he could "give up all for India." Parliament, wrote Wilberforce, was especially "set against granting any countenance to dissenters or Methodists in favor of sending missionaries to India." Dr. Coke, therefore, rather than fail in his long-cherished purpose, was willing to go in his character as a clergyman of the Established Church and as such offered his services.

For this he has been censured, as if self-seeking and ambitious and disloyal to the Church in whose service he had spent forty years of his life. The prudence of his course may well be questioned. Of a hallowed ambition for the salvation of souls he is certainly gloriously convicted, but of sordid self-seeking he was absolutely incapable. "He was already," writes Dr. Stevens, "wielding an episcopal

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power compared with which an Indian see would be insignificant." Salary he sought not, only permission to spend and be spent for India.

The proposition, however, was not accepted. But Dr. Coke's faith and zeal and courage were not to be overcome. Ceylon, "the threshold before the gate of the East," was more accessible than India, and thither he was determined, by God's grace, to go. Friends remonstrated against a man in his sixty-sixth year, worn with toil and heavy cares, braving the perils of a long sea voyage and residence in the torrid zone; but it was in vain.

"I am now dead to Europe," he wrote, "and alive to India. God himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon,' I am so fully convinced of the will of God that methinks I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon and without a friend than not go there. I shall bear all my own expenses, of course," he adds.

He eagerly began the study of Portuguese, which was largely spoken in Ceylon; a study which he subsequently prosecuted on shipboard to the day of his death. The letter just quoted was written from Ireland, and he sought first the sanction of the Irish Conference to his purpose. Revering him as an apostle, and almost as the father of Irish Methodism, it supported with enthusiasm his project. Fired by his

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example, Gideon Ouseley begged, with tears, to be allowed to accompany him, but his providential work was too manifestly at home for the Conference to grant its permission.

Dr. Coke now sought the sanction of the English Conference. Unmoved by their fears for his health, he declared that "their consent, he believed, would add years to his life, while their refusal would infallibly shorten his days." "Many rose to oppose it." We quote the narrative of Dr. Stevens: "Benson, with vehemence, said it would 'ruin Methodism,' for the failure of so gigantic a project would seem to involve the honor of the denomination before the world.

"The debate was adjourned to the next day. Coke, leaning on the arm of one of his missionaries, returned to his lodgings in deep anguish, the tears flowing down his face in the streets. He was not at the antebreakfast session the next day. The missionary hastened to his chamber and found that he had not been in bed; his disheveled silvery locks showed that he had passed the night in deep distress. He had spent the hours in prayer, prostrate on the floor. They went to the Conference and Coke made a thrilling speech. He not only offered to lay himself on the altar of this great sacrifice, but, if the Conference could not meet the finan-

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cial expense of the mission, he offered to lay down thirty thousand dollars toward it. . . .

"The Conference could not resist longer without denying its old faith in the providence of God. It voted him authority to go and take with him seven men, including the one for southern Africa. Coke immediately called out from the session Clough, the missionary who had sympathized with him in his defeat the day before, and walking down the street, not now with tears, but with joy beaming in his eye, and with a full heart, exclaimed, 'Did I not tell you God would answer prayer?'"

Among the missionaries who accompanied him was William Martin Harvard, who, after five years' residence in India and Ceylon, became subsequently superintendent of Missions in Canada, residing for ten years at Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, and other important centers of influence.

Soon the missionary band assembled at Portsmouth for embarkation. Dr. Coke made his will and bequeathed all his property to the fund for aged and worn-out ministers. The Sunday before sailing he preached his last sermon in England, from the text, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." With prophetic faith he exclaims, "It is of little consequence whether we take our flight to glory from

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the land of our nativity, from the trackless ocean,  
or from the shores of Ceylon.

“ ‘ I cannot go  
Where universal Love not shines around ;  
And where he vital breathes there must be joy.’ ”

Like these are the exultant words of the monk Jerome, in the fourth century: “ *Et de Hierosolymis et de Britannia æqualiter patet aula cœlestis,*” thus paraphrased by Horatius Bonar:

“ Not from Jerusalem alone  
The path to heaven ascends :  
As near, as sure, as straight the way  
That leads to the celestial day  
From farthest climes extends—  
Frigid or torrid zone.”

“ On the 30th of December, 1813,” continues the narrative of Dr. Stevens, “ they departed in a fleet of six Indiamen and more than twenty other merchant vessels, convoyed by three ships of war. Coke and two of the missionaries were on board one of the Indiamen, and the rest of the party on board another. All were treated with marked respect by the officers and the hundreds of troops and other passengers who crowded the vessels. In about a week a terrific gale overtook them in the Bay of Biscay, and a ship full of people, in which Coke had at first designed to embark, was lost.

“ Severe gales still swept over them, espe-  
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cially at the Cape of Good Hope. Several sailors were lost overboard, and the missionaries suffered much in their health. . . . In the Indian Ocean Coke's health rapidly declined. On the morning of the 3d of May his servant knocked at his cabin door to awake him at the usual time of half-past five o'clock. He heard no response. Opening the door, he beheld the lifeless body of the missionary extended on the floor. A 'placid smile was on his countenance.' He was cold and stiff, and must have died before midnight.

"Consternation spread among the missionary band, but they lost not their resolution. They prepared to commit his body to the deep, and to prosecute, as they might be able, his great design. One of the missionaries read the burial service, and the moment the sun sunk below the Indian Ocean the coffin was cast into the depths."

In his last letter, written a few days before his death, Coke earnestly asks for additional missionaries, sketches his work in Ceylon and India, and anticipates tracing the work of "that holy and celebrated man, Francis Xavier."

The missionaries with heavy hearts proceeded on their journey, and after a voyage of twenty weeks reached Bombay. But God raised them up friends and opened the way before them. On reaching Ceylon they were hospitably lodged in the government house. Lord Molesworth,

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the commandant, who, with his troops, attended the first service, was so deeply impressed by the sermon that he left a dinner party to kneel in prayer with the missionaries till he found peace in believing. Soon after, returning to England, his ship was lost with all on board save two or three. While it was sinking he walked the deck, pointing the terrified passengers to the Saviour of men. Embracing Lady Molesworth, they sank into the waves, locked in each others' arms, and thus folded together they were washed ashore. Such were the first fruits of the Methodist Mission in Ceylon.

Another trophy of that first sermon became the first native missionary to Asia. Many of the priests also believed. One of these introduced Mr. Harvard, afterward Canadian superintendent, into a temple where, in front of a great idol, he preached from the text, "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." The good work rapidly spread, till there are in Ceylon sixty missionaries and assistants, one hundred and twenty preaching places, and over three thousand church members.

The death of Dr. Coke was the beginning of a new era in the history of Methodist Missions. All the branches of Methodism have their missionary societies, which have become the most

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vigorous propaganda in the world of the Christian religion among the heathen. In Ceylon, in India, in China, in Japan, in South and West Africa, in the West Indies, in South America, in continental Europe, in Australia and Polynesia, multitudes of sunken and superstitious pagans have been raised from abject depths of degradation to the dignity of men and prepared for the fellowship of saints. And this glorious result is in large part the monument and memorial of the life and labors of Dr. Thomas Coke, the father of Methodist Missions.

## XII

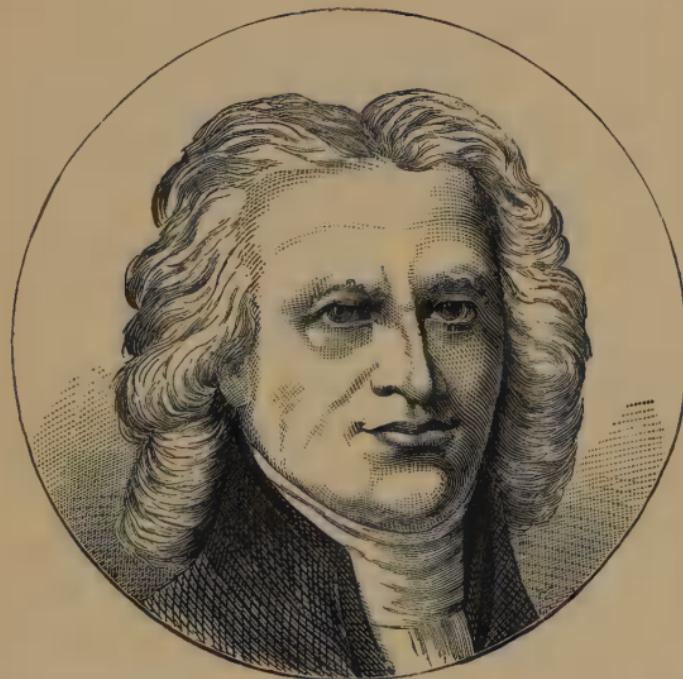
**Francis Asbury, the Pioneer Bishop of America**

"WHOSOEVER will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Such were the words with which the Son of man, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, rebuked the worldly ambition and self-seeking of his disciples. The sovereign pontiffs of Rome, who, surrounded by halberdiers, received the homage of princes, subscribed themselves, even in their most imperious edicts, "Servus servorum Dei" (the servant of the servants of God). These words, which only in the keenest irony could be addressed to those spiritual potentates, describe in sober truth the character of Francis Asbury, the pioneer bishop of America.

At the mention of that name there rises the vision of an aged man with snow-white hair and benignant aspect, worn with toil and travel, brown with the brand of the sun and with exposure to the vicissitudes of fair and foul weather. His brow, the home of high thoughts, is furrowed by the care of all the churches com-

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ing upon him daily. No prelatic lawn, like "samite, mystic, wonderful," invests with its flowing folds his person. Clad in sober black or homespun brown, he bestrides his horse, his wardrobe and library contained in the bulging



FRANCIS ASBURY.

saddlebags which constitute his sole equipage. Instead of lodging in an episcopal palace, he is glad to find shelter in the hut of a backwoods settler or to bivouac beneath the open sky.

With much of their original force he might adopt the words of the first and greatest mis-

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sionary of the cross, and exclaim: "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, . . . in perils in the wilderness, . . . in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." With no less truthfulness than St. Paul himself might he declare, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." He was an heroic soul in an heroic age. He united, in a rich garland of graces, the fervor of an apostle, the boldness of a confessor, the piety of a saint, the tenderness of a woman, and the self-sacrifice of a martyr. His life and labors will well repay our study.

Francis Asbury was a gift from the Old World to the New—from the mother to the daughter land. He was born in Staffordshire, near Birmingham, in 1745, the year of the Scottish rising in favor of the Pretender. He was early sent to school, but suffered much from the petty tyranny of the pedant pedagogue, who, "clothed with a little brief authority," made the lives of his pupils bitter unto them. But even as a child he carried his troubles to the throne of grace. He records that "God was very near to him—a very present help in time of trouble."

In his fourteenth year he left home to learn a trade. His religious impressions deepened, and

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hearing the Methodists spoken against, as a people righteous overmuch, he sought their acquaintance. His desire was soon gratified. He expressed some surprise that the service was not in a church. It was probably in a private house or barn. "But," he records, "it was better than a church; the people were so devout; men and women kneeling and all saying 'Amen.'"

This simple spiritual worship took hold of his soul. He engaged with zeal in religious work, holding prayer meetings on heath and holt, in cottage and on common. He was rewarded by seeing many converted from their sins. He was soon licensed as local preacher, and held forth the word of life in the Wesleyan chapels of the vicinity to "wondering, weeping thousands." Multitudes were attracted by his extreme youth, he being then not more than seventeen years of age. Besides his Sabbath services he often preached five times during the week, faithfully attending meanwhile to his daily toil.

In his twenty-first year he was received into the Wesleyan Conference and appointed to circuit work. As an obedient son in the Gospel he labored faithfully on his several circuits. At the Bristol Conference, in 1771, John Wesley called for volunteers for the work in America. His heart still lingered on the shores where he had toiled and endured great trial of affliction a

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quarter of a century before. Whitefield, with tongue of fire and heart of flame, had traversed the continent—like an angel, trumpet-tongued—calling on men everywhere to repent. Philip Embury and Captain Webb had begun to organize Methodist societies in the New World, and thither Pilmoor and Boardman had been sent two years before. Among the first to respond to Wesley's call was Francis Asbury, unknowing of the toil and trial he thus espoused or of the glorious reward and abiding renown that he should win.

With tears and many prayers he took leave of his beloved parents, whom he was never to see again. His outfit was of the slenderest kind, and on shipboard he was obliged to sleep on the bare planks. Full of zeal, he preached to the sailors when it was so stormy that he had to seek support from the mast. His heart yearned for the multitudes wandering in the wilderness of the New World as sheep having no shepherd.

After a weary eight-weeks' voyage he reached Philadelphia. He began forthwith his active work, and his labors were followed by a "great awakening." He had been thoroughly steeped with the principle of John Wesley—"to go to those who needed him most." From an entry in his Journal we learn what manner of man he was: "My brethren seem unwilling to leave

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the cities, but I think I shall show them the way. . . . I have nothing to seek but the glory of God, nothing to fear but his displeasure. . . . I am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches, nor will I ever fear the face of man, or know any man after the flesh, if I beg my bread from door to door; but,



BIRTHPLACE OF FRANCIS ASBURY.

whomsoever I please or displease, I will be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul." There spoke the hero heart. In this man dwelt the spirit of John Knox or of John the Baptist. He was evidently a God-appointed captain of Israel's host and true overshepherd of souls.

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Forthwith Asbury began to range through the country, everywhere preaching the word. At New York he preached to five thousand people on the race-course, and exhorted the multitude to run with patience the race set before them.

In 1772 Wesley appointed Asbury superintendent of the societies in America, which had considerably increased in number. The next year the first Conference was held in Philadelphia. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed that for several years the membership was nearly doubled annually. Great revivals took place, especially in Maryland and Virginia. Multitudes were stricken to the earth as by a supernatural power, and rose to praise God.

The unhappy conflict with the mother country now broke out. The bruit of war was abroad in the land. Some of the English preachers felt constrained by their loyalty to return home. But Asbury declared: "I can by no means leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America; neither is it the part of a good shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger. Therefore I am determined, by the grace of God, not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may."

During a fit of sickness in 1776 he went to recuperate at Warm Sulphur Springs, Virginia. His lodgings, he said, though only sixteen feet

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by twenty, contained seven beds and sixteen persons, besides some noisy children. His plan of duty as an invalid was "to read about a hundred pages a day, pray in public five times a day, preach in the open air every other day, and lecture in prayer meeting every evening." Under this regimen, with the blessing of God, he soon recovered his health.

Suspected, apparently, of sympathy with the mother country, he was required to take the oath of allegiance to the State of Maryland. Its form, however, was such that he could not conscientiously accept it. He was therefore obliged to leave the State and take refuge in Delaware, where the State oath was not required of ministers of religion. He found an asylum for a time in the house of a friend. He soon discovered, however, that he must seek safety elsewhere, and he went forth as a fugitive, not knowing whither he went. He had not gone many miles before he met a funeral. Although it increased his danger, he did not hesitate to stop and give an address full of Christian sympathy.

He was compelled to take refuge in "a wild and dismal swamp," which he likened to "the shades of death." Three thousand miles from home and kindred, regarded as an enemy to his adopted country, and, worst of all, obliged to remain in hiding when the word of God was a

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fire in his bones, and his soul was longing to range the country and proclaim the Gospel to perishing multitudes, his heart was much depressed. Yet did he sing his "Sursum Corda" in the wilderness, and, under the special protection of the governor of the State, who knew and honored his worth, was allowed to come forth from his hiding and engage without hindrance in his work.

That work was no holiday amusement. The following extracts from his Journal will indicate its character: "We set out for Crump's, over rocks, hills, creeks, and pathless woods. The young man with me was heartless before we had traveled a mile. . . . With great difficulty we came into the settlement . . . after traveling eight or nine hours, the people looking almost as wild as the deer in the woods. . . . I can see little else but cabins in these parts, built with poles. I crossed Deep River in a ferryboat, and the poor ferryman swore because I had not a shilling to give him."\* Swimming his horse across another river, he found shelter in the cabin of a friendly settler. "His resting place, however," says Strickland's record of his life, "was on the top of a chest, and his clothes his only covering.

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\*On another occasion a ferryman declined to take any fee, saying he never charged ministers or babes, for, if they did no good, they did no harm. "Nay," replied Asbury, "that is not true, for the minister who does no good does much harm."

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This, however, was better far than he often had. Frequently, when benighted in the wilderness, he has slept on the ground or on rocks, or on some boards in a deserted cabin, with nothing to eat." Day after day he traveled over the broken spurs of the Alleghanies, without food from morning to night. His mind was raised to loftiest contemplation by the sublime scenery, and his heart was cheered by his opportunities of breaking the bread of life to the lonely mountaineers.

A change in his relations to the Church was now to take place. "Fifteen years," says Dr. Strickland, "had elapsed since Asbury began preaching in America. He was now forty years of age, and more than half of his life had been spent in preaching the Gospel, yet up to this time he was an unordained man. No ordinances of the Church had ever yet been administered by his hands, and he consented, with the rest of his brethren in the ministry, to receive the sacrament at the hands of the Episcopal priesthood." There were now in America one hundred and four Methodist ministers, and the membership had risen to fifteen thousand.

It was felt that the time had come when the anomalous condition of these men should cease. John Wesley, therefore, wrote a memorable epistle—often quoted—to the American socie-

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ties, from which we make the following extracts:

"Lord King's *Account of the Primitive Church* convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and, consequently, have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time to exercise this right by ordaining part of our traveling preachers, but I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belong.

"But the case is widely different between England and America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers, so that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end, and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them by administering baptism and the Lord's Supper.

"If anyone will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church. And we judge it best they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

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This document exhibits at once the wise judgment and lofty Christian expediency of the founder of Methodism. His challenge to be shown a more excellent way of dealing with the question has not yet been accepted. We cannot but regard it as a providential blessing that the Bishop of London declined to ordain Dr. Coke as a bishop for America, thus breaking forever the superstitious bond of so-called apostolic succession so far as concerned the free Methodism of the New World.

In the gathering of the itinerant preachers assembled at Baltimore, December 24, 1784,\* this figment of priestcraft, which makes validity of ordination depend on a shadowy succession through the Dark Ages as the only vehicle of apostolic grace, was boldly repudiated. It was felt that the true anointing was that of the Holy Ghost—that the real successors of the apostles were those who received their inspiration and authority from the same Master and Lord.

This Conference therefore organized itself into "The Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States," and Dr. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury were elected the first bishops thereof. As Asbury was up to this period an unordained man, he was first, on Christmas

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\*It is known as the Christmas Conference. It lasted from December 24, 1784, to January 2, 1785.

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Day, ordained by Dr. Coke, deacon; on the 26th, elder; and on the following day, bishop or “superintendent,” as he is called in the official document.

Such rapid ecclesiastical promotion is, we believe, unprecedented since the days of St. Ambrose, who, notwithstanding his vigorous “*nolo episcopari*,” was, though but a catechumen, elected Bishop of Milan A. D. 374.

The new title of Asbury, however, increased neither his power nor his influence among his brethren. He already ruled by love in all their hearts. His elevation of office gave him only preeminence in toil. The day after the Conference he rode fifty miles through forest and snow; the next day he rode forty more, and so on till the Sabbath, when he halted for labor, not for rest. This was his initiation into the office of bishop.

True to its original genius, American Methodism promoted zealously the cause of higher education. With much effort Cokesbury College—commemorating in its name the two superintendents of the Church—was established in the lovely valley of the Susquehanna, overlooking the broad Chesapeake Bay. The curriculum was comprehensive, embracing English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and German. To preachers' sons and indigent students tuition,

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board, and clothing were free. Others were expected to pay a moderate fee. The "recreation" of the students consisted in agricultural labor and building—"both necessary," it is remarked, "in a new country." After a useful and successful existence for ten years it was burned to the ground. A heap of smoldering ruins was all that marked its lovely site.

Asbury, on whom devolved the chief toil of finding funds for its maintenance, thus writes, date 1796: "Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of £10,000 in ten years [an immense sum in those days]. If any man would give me £10,000 per year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it." His salary at this time was sixty-four dollars a year. It was evidently, therefore, not for the emolument that he "did and suffered" all this.

Undaunted by disaster, the Methodists of Baltimore purchased, at a cost of \$22,000, a building in that city, and established Asbury College. The change of name, however, brought no change of fortune, and it, too, was soon destroyed by fire.

A Methodist academy was also established in Georgia, and another in the West; but the difficulty of maintenance was great. "We have the poor," writes Asbury, "but they have no

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money, and the wicked rich we do not wish to ask."

Asbury's labors during this period were excessive, his lodgings were often wretched, and his fare was meager and poor. He and Dr. Coke sometimes rode three hundred miles a week, preaching every day. Asbury's Journal recounts his riding seventy-five miles in one day, reaching a cabin at midnight, and leaving it at four in the morning. Sometimes he slept in the woods, sometimes on the floor of a cabin, whose walls were often adorned with coon or wild-cat skins, and sometimes he fared even worse, for he writes, "O, how glad should I be of a plain cleank plank to lie on as preferable to the beds!" It was his misfortune to have a delicate skin and a keen sense of smell. It was considered a lucky day when he dined on raccoon or bearsteaks, cooked by a fire that the wind and rain often extinguished.

In some of his distant missionary excursions—at times traveling fifty miles without seeing a house—for protection against wild beasts and wilder men Asbury used to travel with armed bands of mounted hunters. It was a time of Indian massacres. The fate of the victims was most tragical; one wretched survivor was four days dragging herself a distance of only two miles. Sometimes Asbury's party were pursued

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by bands of infuriated savages, to escape from whom they had to press on all night through the tangled wilderness.

Asbury never married. In his quaint Journal he gives the following reasons for what could scarcely be called his choice: "Among the duties of my office was that of traveling extensively, and I could hardly expect to find a woman with grace enough to enable her to live but one week out of fifty-two with her husband. Besides, what right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her his wife, and by voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage state by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit long to be put asunder? It is neither just nor generous. I may add to this that I had but little money, and with this I administered to the necessities of a beloved mother till I was fifty-seven. If I have done wrong, I hope God and the sex will forgive me."

"He often impoverished himself," writes his biographer, "to relieve the wants of others. At one time we find him with only two dollars in the world, and his poor preachers ragged and destitute. First his little purse was drained, and then followed his cloak and watch and shirt." His own clothes were often threadbare

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and faded, and he has been known to start on a journey of two thousand miles with an outfit of only three dollars. He was almost as dependent on the providence of God as was Elijah when fed by ravens. These were no times for marrying or giving in marriage. He who did so was almost invariably compelled to "locate" in order to earn a living for his family. "We have lost the labors," writes Asbury, "of two hundred of the best men of America from this cause."

As a discreet unmarried man, who was destined by his own choice to live and die in celibacy, Asbury, when he could do so, avoided the society of ladies. But sometimes he could not do so. Dr. Strickland, in his biography, relates one instance which we give largely in his own words:

Asbury was traveling in a wild Western country, and was in danger of missing his way and becoming lost in the woods. The daughter of his host proposed to pioneer him through the wilderness. He did not positively decline the offer of his fair guide, though it would have suited his notions better to have gone alone, even if he had missed his way. Roads there were none; nothing but blind or "blazed" paths. The horses were soon ready and the bishop in his saddle. With the celerity for which the Western girls were famous Mary

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sprang to the back of her spirited steed and was at once by his side. They soon entered the forest and were lost to sight. Mary knew the route and led the way.

They came at length to a deep and narrow ravine, whose rugged and precipitous banks seemed to forbid a passage. The bishop at beholding it felt relieved, as he thought he had arrived at a Rubicon which his fair companion could not pass. Spurring his horse, he cleared the ravine at a bound. He congratulated himself that he was now rid of what he felt rather an incumbrance, as he had considerable qualms of conscience about going to the appointment, where he was a stranger, in company with a young lady.

Turning on his horse, he was about bidding her good-bye, with the exclamation, "Mary, you can't do that"—a most unhappy suggestion for him to make to a proud-spirited Western girl. "I'll try," was her prompt and fearless response, and, suiting the action to the word, horse and rider were in a moment at his side. Faithful to her task, she accompanied the bishop to the end of his journey, and after the preaching returned with him to her father's house.

Asbury was the father of missions in American Methodism, sending out preachers to the destitute settlements, and soliciting funds all

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over the country for their support. He also established "The Preachers' Fund" for the aid of superannuates, widows, and orphans. He organized the Book Concern, which has been such a source of diffusion of religious light and knowledge. He was the first man in America to introduce Sunday schools (1786). The schools, according to the Discipline of 1792, were held "from six in the morning until ten, and from two in the afternoon until six," where it did not interfere with public worship.

The early years of this century were times of great religious revival, especially in the Middle and Southern States. The immense gatherings known as camp meetings took their origin from the open-air sacramental services held by the Presbyterian ministers, which lasted several days. Sometimes from ten to fifteen thousand persons were assembled, and the Presbyterian and Methodist ministers labored side by side in their work of faith. So vast were the crowds that several preachers from different stands proclaimed at the same time the word of life, and hundreds might have been seen prostrate on the earth or wild with joy, shouting the praises of God. Sometimes thirty preachers were present and four hundred persons were converted.

Toil, travel, and exposure wore down Asbury's

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strength, yet he gave himself no rest. In his fifty-seventh year he crossed the rugged Cumberland Mountains for the fiftieth time. He was suffering from acute pain in his whole body and with swelling of his knees, which he attributed to sleeping uncovered in the woods. By the aid of laudanum he got two hours' sleep in the forest beneath a blanket stretched out like a tent. His companions slept beneath a cloak thrown over a branch. He had to be lifted on his horse like a child. Scarce able to refrain from crying out in his agony, he writes, "Lord, let me die, for death hath no terrors." Yet the heroic soul so sustained the frail body that through mountains and forests he completed his usual yearly journey of six thousand miles.

He deeply commiserated the wretched emigrants journeying by hundreds over the mountains—almost foodless, shelterless, clothesless, toiling along on foot, those who were best off having only one horse for two or three children to ride at once. Yearning over these lost sheep in the wilderness, he writes in his Journal, "We must send preachers after these people."

Methodism in those days was to many an object of intense aversion. Let one example of this suffice: Dr. Hinde was the military physi-

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cian of General Wolfe. At the close of the French war he settled in Kentucky. His wife and daughter joined the Methodists. The latter he banished from home. The former he put under medical treatment for what he feigned to regard as insanity. His remedy was a blister plaster extending the whole length of the back. The fortitude and meekness with which the Christian wife bore her persecutions resulted in the doctor's conviction and subsequent conversion. He became one of Asbury's best friends. "He will never again," wrote the bishop, "put a blister on his wife's head to draw the Methodism out of her heart."

In his sixty-third year the indomitable pioneer writes: "I am young again and boast of being able to ride six thousand miles on horseback in ten months. My round will embrace the United States, the territory, and Canada." At this age he frequently rode three hundred miles a week. On his "round" he was attacked with inflammatory rheumatism. But he provided himself with a pair of crutches and rode on through a shower of rain. He had to be lifted from his horse and carried into the house.

The Rev. Henry Boehm thus describes Bishop Asbury's visit to Canada in 1811: "Having crossed Lake Champlain, the bishop preached in a barroom at Plattsburg, and the next day

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entered Canada. The roads over rocks, gullies, and stumps were enough to jolt a hale bishop to death, let alone a poor, infirm old man. On entering St. Regis, as Bishop Asbury was leading his horse across a bridge made of poles, the animal got his feet between them and sunk into the mud and water. Away went the saddle-bags; the books and clothes were wet, and the horse was fast. We got a pole under him to pry him out; at the same time the horse made a leap and came out safe and sound.

"We crossed the St. Lawrence in romantic style. We hired four Indians to paddle us over. They lashed three log canoes together and put our horses in them, their fore feet in one canoe, their hind feet in another. We were a long time crossing, for some part was rough, especially the rapids, and reached shelter about midnight.

"The bishop was delighted with the people and the country. 'Here is a decent, loving people,' he wrote. 'My soul is much united to them. Surely this is a land which God hath blessed.' He called on the Heck family, the Methodist pioneers of Canada, as of the United States, and traveled over the rough roads suffering like a martyr with inflammatory rheumatism. He crossed Lake Ontario from Kingston to Sackett's Harbor in an open sailboat. A tre-

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mendous storm broke upon them. In order to make the bishop as comfortable as possible," continues Mr. Boehm, "I made him a bed, covered him with the blankets we carried with us, and fixed the canvas over him like a tent, to keep off the wind and the rain. Then I lay down on the bottom of the boat on some stones placed there for ballast, which I covered with some hay I procured at Kingston for our horses. At midnight a sudden squall struck our frail bark; the canvas flapped and awoke and alarmed the bishop. He cried out, 'Henry! Henry! the horses are going overboard.' I told him all was safe, that it was merely the flapping of the sail in the midnight winds. Reaching land, the feeble old bishop, with inflamed and swollen foot, set out on horseback in a heavy rain for Conference, 'sore, lame, and weary,' 'But Bishop McKendree,' he wrote, 'nursed me as if I had been his own babe.' "

His growing infirmities now compelled him to use a carriage, and this is the way the grand old veteran writes: "We are riding in a poor thirty-dollar chaise in partnership, two bishops of us [himself and Bishop McKendree], but it must be confessed it tallies well with our purses. What bishops! Well, but we have great names; each Western, Southern, and Virginia Conference will have a thousand souls truly converted

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to God; and is this not an equivalent for a light purse, and are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!"

Yet he felt the weight of years and travail. A little later he writes: "I am happy; but I am sick and weak and in heaviness by reason of suffering and labor. Sometimes I am ready to cry out, 'Lord, take me home to rest.' Courage, my soul!"

His work seemed to increase as his time for toil grew shorter. In his seventieth year he traveled six thousand miles in eight months, met nine Conferences, and attended ten camp meetings, and at these meetings he toiled above measure, often sleeping but two hours out of the twenty-four. Even when he had to be carried into the church he would preach with unquenchable zeal. From one of these services he was carried to his lodgings and "thoroughly blistered," says the record, "for high fever." Two days after he rode thirty miles through the bitter cold, and next day thirty-six more, when he was again carried to the pulpit to preach the word of life. But the frail body was borne up by the strong soul that seemed as if it would not let him die.

But the end was approaching. In his seventy-first year he attended his last Conference. Like a faithful patriarch, leaning upon his staff, he

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addressed the elders of the tribes of the Methodist Israel, being assured that he would ere long be called away from their councils. A sense of loneliness came upon him as he remembered the friends of other days who had passed away. Five and forty years of toil and travail in cities and villages, in the log cabins and wildernesses of the far West and South, traveling round the continent, with but few exceptions, every year (he crossed the Alleghanies sixty times), subject to every kind of itinerant hardship and privation, wasted away the frail body, but left his indomitable spirit strong in immortal youth, preening its wings for its everlasting flight to that land where they grow not weary evermore.

When unable longer to stand he sat in the pulpit, and poured out the treasures of his loving, overflowing heart to the weeping multitude, who sorrowed most of all at the thought "that they should see his face no more." He writes at this time in his Journal, "I die daily; am made perfect by labor and suffering. There is no time nor opportunity to take medicine by daytime. I must do it at night. I am wasting away."

By slow and difficult stages, continues Dr. Strickland, whose account we condense, he passed through South and North Carolina till he reached Richmond, Va. "I must once more

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deliver my testimony in this place," he urged in reply to remonstrance. It was a bright spring Sabbath, glorious with all the beauty of the South. The venerable bishop, with his silvery hair flowing down his shoulders, announced in tremulous tones his last text: "For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness." He seemed like one who was waiting for the summons of the heavenly Bridegroom. From time to time he was compelled to pause from sheer exhaustion. Nevertheless he preached for nearly an hour, during which time, says the narrator, a deep and awful stillness pervaded the entire assembly, broken only by the sobs of sympathetic hearers. The spectacle was one of moral sublimity.

Eager to attend the General Conference at Baltimore, the dying man pressed on. But near Fredericksburg, on ground since deluged with blood shed in civil war, he reached his last earthly resting place. He was carried into the house which he was never to leave till his worn and weary body should be carried to the tomb. On the last Sabbath of his life he called the family together for worship. The twenty-first chapter of Revelation was read; and, doubtless, by the eye and ear of faith, he beheld the holy city coming down out of heaven and heard the blessed assurance that God would wipe away all

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tears forever. As the service closed the spirit of the patriarch passed away, and thus,

Like some broad river widening toward the sea,  
Calmly and grandly joined eternity.

Beneath the pulpit of the Eutaw Methodist Church, in Baltimore, where he had so often preached in life, sleep the remains of the pioneer bishop of America. In labors he was more abundant than even the apostolic Wesley himself, since the conditions under which he toiled were so much more arduous. He ordained upward of three thousand preachers. He preached seventeen thousand sermons. He traveled three hundred thousand miles—from the pine-shadowed St. Lawrence to the savannas of Georgia, from the surges of the Atlantic to the mighty Father of Waters—through pathless forests, over rugged mountains, and across rapid rivers. He had the care of a hundred thousand souls and the appointment of four hundred preachers.

His character was one of the most rounded and complete and his life one of the most heroic recorded in the annals of the Church. Says one who knew him well: “He was great without science and venerable without titles. He pursued that most difficult course as most men pursue their pleasures. The delights of leisured study and the charms of recreation he alike sacrificed to the more sublime work of saving souls.

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Prayer was the seasoning of all his avocations. It was the preface to all business, the conclusion of whatever he undertook. He never suffered the cloth to be removed from the table till he had given thanks to God in prayer."

His preaching was attended with a divine unction which made it refreshing as the dew of heaven. His words were at times "a dagger to the hilt at every stroke," and at times so tender that they made the hearts of listening thousands

" Thrill as if an angel spoke,  
Or Ariel's finger touched the string."

He was a man dead to the world—a man of one work. The zeal of the Lord's house consumed him till he wore out in the work and died at his post. "If I can only be instrumental," he was wont to exclaim, with streaming eyes, "in saving one soul in traveling round the continent, I'll travel round till I die."

His devotion and tenderness toward his parents were exceedingly beautiful. In their old age he regularly remitted to them a portion of his meager income. "My salary," he writes, "is sixty-four dollars. I have sold my watch and library, and would sell my shirts before you should want. I spend very little. The contents of a small pair of saddlebags will do for me, and one coat a year. Had I ten thousand

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pounds per year, you should be welcome if you needed it."

To his aged and widowed mother he wrote, with tender recollections of his boyhood: "Were you to see me and the color of my hair—nearly that of your own—my eyes are weak, even with glasses. When I was a child and would pry into the Bible by twinkling firelight you used to say, 'Frank, you will spoil your eyes.' Hard wear and hard fare; but I am healthy and lean, gray-headed and dim-sighted. I wish I could come to see you, but I see no way to do it without sinning against God and his Church."

Asbury could not be called in the strictest sense a scholar. He never enjoyed the university training of the Wesleys, Fletcher, and Coke. But he was better read than many a college graduate in theology, Church history and polity, civil history, and general literature. In his saddlebags he carried his Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament, and in his long and lonely rides and in the smoky cabins of the wilderness he diligently studied the oracles of God in their original tongues.

His Journals give evidence of his shrewd observation, keen wit, and strong idiomatic English. "Be the willing servant of slaves," he was wont to say, "but the slave of none." At the Virginia salt works he writes, "Alas! there

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is little salt here, and when Sister Russell is gone there will be none left." He describes a journey in New Jersey as "over dead sands and among a dead people." Yale College in his day was considered the "seat of science and sin." Yet, with all his wit, did he never in the pulpit stoop

"To court a grin when he should save a soul."

His keen sense of the beautiful in nature is shown in his sympathetic descriptions of the "noble Hudson," the "lofty Catskills, with their towering cliffs," the "beautiful Ohio," the wild Potomac," the "lovely Shenandoah," "thundering Niagara," "the interminable forests," and the "broad prairies," with whose varied aspects he was so familiar.

Bishop Asbury had an intense antipathy to the drinking customs so rife in the community, which he denounced as the curse of the country. The vile whisky of the day he denominated "the devil's tea." He described the drovers and their herds whom he met on the roads as "beasts on four legs and beasts made by whisky on two." "Keep whisky out of your cabins," he was wont to exhort the settlers, "and keep them clean, for your health's sake and for your soul's sake; for there is no religion in dirt, filth, and fleas."

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Few men were more revered and beloved. Beyond the sea as well as at home his character was honored, and the British Conference requested him to visit that body, engaging to pay all the expenses of his journey. Few have had so many children named after them. Many of these became his sons in the ministry. To all who bore his name he left by his will a handsome copy of the Scriptures. Without wife or child, the Church of God was his spouse, which he loved and cherished better than his own life, and a great multitude of spiritual offspring rose up to call him blessed.

The record of such a life is an inspiration to duty; a summons, like a clarion call, to blessed toil for the Master and to increased zeal in his service. It is a scathing rebuke to self-seeking, or apathy, or indolence in the most glorious of callings. Asbury has lived out his threescore years and ten on earth, but his work, behold, it remaineth for evermore.

The struggle and grief are all past,  
The glory and worth live on.

On the Methodism of this broad continent, from the region beneath the Northern Bear to that which sees the Southern Cross, from the crowded cities on the Atlantic to the far-off lonely regions

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Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound  
Save his own dashings,

he has impressed the stamp of his powerful mind, his mighty faith, his unconquerable will. And down the ages the tide of his influence shall roll in ever-increasing volume till time shall be no more.

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### XIII

#### Some Early Preachers and Bishops of American Methodism

THE pioneer bishops, Asbury and Coke, had worthy comrades and successors in the great work of building up the Methodist Church on this continent. Of a few of these we give brief sketches, but of most of them the sole record is on high. From the plastic state of society, from the mighty forces which were molding the age, men of force of character were enabled to leave their impress more strongly on their time than is now possible. They stood near the springs of the nation's history and were able to turn their currents into the deep, wide channels in which they now flow.

Such a man, contemporary with Coke and Asbury, was Freeborn Garrettson. His very name is significant of a high-souled love of liberty. He was born about the middle of the eighteenth century, of a leading Maryland family, possessing broad acres and many slaves. The Methodist itinerants were abroad in the land. Their faithful preaching reached his conscience and probed it to the quick. Riding through the

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lonely forest he was so oppressed that he could scarcely support his burden. "I threw," he says, "the reins of my bridle on the horse's neck, and putting my hands together cried out, 'Lord, I submit!'" Soon he was able to re-



FREEBORN GARRETTSON.

joice in the sense of conscious pardon. "My soul was so exceedingly happy," he adds, "that I seemed as if I wanted to take wing and fly away to heaven."

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A few days later he gathered his household together and declared to his slaves their freedom, convinced that "it is not right to keep our fellow-creatures in bondage." "Till then," he adds, "I had never suspected that slavekeeping was wrong; I had never read a book on the subject, nor been told so by any. . . . It was God, not man, that taught me the impropriety of holding slaves; and I shall never be able to praise him enough for it." They all knelt together, white and black, as children of a common Father, and, said the young emancipator, "a divine sweetness ran through my whole frame."

He forthwith began to exhort and preach and form classes. The natural result soon followed. "He was attacked by ruffians, smitten on the face, mobbed, and summoned to drill as a soldier. When carried before a military officer he 'told his experience,' and sat on his horse 'exhorting with tears a thousand people.' The court martial dismissed him with a fine of twelve dollars and a half a year, but he was never called upon to pay it."

He soon began his "ranging" from the Carolinas to Nova Scotia, preaching "twice, thrice, and sometimes four times a day to listening multitudes bathed in tears." This he kept up for half a century, and left ineffaceable "foot-

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prints in the sands of time" wherever he preached. His views on slavery won him a warm welcome of a not very cordial kind. "He was menaced by persecutors, interrupted sometimes in his sermons, threatened by armed men, and one of his friends was shot (but not mortally) for entertaining him." Yet he preached often to the slaves, "weeping with them in their wrongs and rejoicing in their consolations."\*

Once he was felled from his horse by a blow on the head from a bludgeon and knocked senseless to the ground. Yet, like Stephen, he had divine consolation under the rage of his persecutors. "The heavens," he writes, "in a very glorious manner seemed to be open; and by faith I saw my dear Redeemer standing at the right hand of the Father pleading my cause. . . . I was so happy that I could scarcely contain myself." With his face bruised and scarred, and sore wounded, he preached that night from his bed, and next day rode many miles and again preached twice with power.

It was the unhappy period of the Revolutionary War. Political feeling ran high. "He is a Tory; hang him! hang him!" shouted the mob, as he dismounted from his horse. "I was

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\* When itinerating through New England many years later Garretson was often accompanied by his faithful companion, Black Harry, a pious colored man, who not only ministered to his physical comfort, but also aided in his spiritual labors by exhorting and preaching after him.

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in a fair way," he says, "to be torn to pieces." But with boldness he declared the whole council of God. "One person sitting in a window, a quarter of a mile away, was alarmed by the truth and afterward converted."

In a neighborhood which was notoriously vicious—the haunt of "swearers, drunkards, horse racers, and gamblers"—he preached with such power that the whole region was reformed. In fifteen months in the Delaware peninsula thirteen hundred members were added to the Church.

In the same State he was arrested while preaching, and thrown into jail. "During a fortnight," he says, "I had a dirty floor for my bed, my saddlebags for my pillow, and two large windows open, with a cold east wind blowing upon me. But I had great consolation in my Lord, and could say, 'Thy will be done.' . . . Since that time I have preached to more than three thousand people in one congregation not far from the place where I was imprisoned, and many of my worst enemies have bowed to the scepter of our sovereign Lord."

Garrettson was ordained elder by Dr. Coke at the famous Christmas Conference in 1784. At this Conference was present William Black, the apostle of Methodism in the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. He was a sturdy Yorkshireman, who brought the Old Country

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Methodist fire to the New World. His earnest appeal awoke a warm response in the heart of Garrettson, who volunteered to go as a missionary to those then rugged northern wilds. In his semicentennial sermon he gives the following account of some of his experiences in Nova Scotia :

“ I traversed the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with my knapsack on my back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness, when it was not expedient to take a horse ; and I had often to wade through morasses half-leg deep in mud and water, frequently satisfying my hunger with a piece of bread and pork from my knapsack, quenching my thirst from a brook, and resting my weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. Thanks be to God ! He compensated me for all my toil, for many precious souls were awakened and converted to God.”

Garrettson continued his labors as pathfinder of Methodism along the far-extending frontier for nearly half a century. At length, unable longer to endure the hardships of the itinerant life, he was obliged to desist. He died in New York city in 1827, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. His ruling passion was strong in death. In his will he made provision for the support of a missionary preacher to carry on the work to which he himself had devoted his life.

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

We hold in our hand as we write a meager, leather-covered, time-stained book, published in Baltimore in 1810. It is Jesse Lee's *Short History* of the Methodists in the New World. A list of the subscribers presents such characteristic Puritan names as Bezaleel and Zelotes Fuller, Persis Stebbins, Abel Bliss, Resolved Waterman, Comfort Fillmore, Providence Baker, and Zadoc Lackland; also the good Dutch names of Nieukirk, Kleinhoff, Lauderbach, and many others which give a key to their history. In this book the writer recites some of his own adventures as a pioneer preacher.

Jesse Lee was born in Virginia—the mother of Presidents and of famous Methodist preachers and bishops—in 1758. He was soundly converted, under a soul-saving Methodist ministry, in his fifteenth year, and was soon called of God and his brethren to join the Gospel brigade for the conquest of the continent. Although Southern born and bred, he is perhaps best known as the Methodist apostle of New England. While making his way through the land where the Pilgrim Fathers had sought freedom to worship God after the dictates of their conscience—a privilege which they refused to the Quakers and the Methodists—he asked permission to preach in an orchard. His request was denied, lest he should

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“tread the grass down.” He therefore took his stand by the roadside, as did our Saviour and his apostles in Galilee, and as did John Wesley and his helpers in England, and preached out of a full heart the glad tidings of a free salvation.

Soon after we find him preaching beneath the famous elm on Boston Common, one of the sacred trees of New England. Dr. Abel Stevens thus describes Lee’s first sermon in Boston:

“In the center of the Boston Common still stands a gigantic elm, the crowning ornament of its beautiful scenery. On a fine afternoon in July, 1790, a man of middle age, of a severe but shrewd countenance, and dressed in a style of simplicity which might have been taken for the guise of a Quaker, took his stand upon a table beneath the branches of that venerable tree. Four persons approached and gazed upon him with surprise while he sang a hymn. It was sung by his solitary voice. At its conclusion he knelt down upon the table and, stretching forth his hands, prayed with a fervor and unction so unwonted in the cool and minute petitions of the Puritan pulpits that it attracted the groups of promenaders who had come to spend an evening hour in the shady walks, and by the time he rose from his knees they were streaming in processions from the different points of the Common toward him. While he opened his small

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Bible and preached to them, without ‘notes,’ but with ‘the demonstration of the Spirit and of power,’ the multitude grew into a dense mass three thousand strong, eagerly catching every utterance of the singular stranger, and some of them receiving his message into ‘honest and good hearts.’”

A spectator who heard him at or about this time says: “When he stood up in the open air and began to sing I knew not what it meant. I drew near, however, to listen, and thought the prayer was the best I had ever heard. . . . When he entered upon the subject-matter of his text it was with such an easy, natural flow of expression and in such a tone of voice that I could not refrain from weeping, and many others were affected in the same way. When he was done, and we had an opportunity of expressing our views to each other, it was agreed that such a man had not visited New England since the days of Whitefield. I heard him again, and thought I could follow him to the ends of the earth.”

The coldly intellectual New England temperament seemed not as congenial to the germs of Methodism as the warm-hearted sympathies of the Southern and Middle States. After seven months of indefatigable toil the result of Lee’s labors was the formation of but two classes, with

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

an aggregate of five members. But he cheerfully writes, "Glory be to God that I now begin to see some fruit of my labor in this barren part of the world." He departed on his way to other toils, exclaiming again: "Glory be to God that he ever called me to work in his vineyard and sent me to seek and to feed the sheep of his fold in New England. . . . The Lord only knows the difficulties I have had to wade through, yet his grace is sufficient for me; when I pass through the fire and water he is with me, and rough ways are smooth when Jesus bears me in his arms."

Amid the inclemencies of a cold and stormy day he set out, "and," he writes again, "my soul was transported with joy; the snow falling, the wind blowing, prayer ascending, faith increasing, grace descending, heaven smiling, and love abounding."

"I have found great assistance from the Lord of late," he continues. "To-day I have preached four times, and felt better at the conclusion of my labor than I did when I first arose in the morning. . . . I am the first preacher of our way that has ever visited this part of the country."

Before long the genial, happy, hymn-singing Methodist, who preached every day, and often several times a day wherever opportunity of-

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

fered—in barns, kitchens, at the crossroads, by the wayside, in schoolhouses, and sometimes in the courthouse or more liberal village church, where he used to light the fire and ring the bell himself—overcame even Puritan prejudice. The hearty singing of the joyous Methodist hymns won their way to the hearts of the people. Though the elders and deacons denounced him as a heretic and an Arminian, yet the glad-some doctrine brought comfort to souls burdened with the stern theology of Calvin.

Lee's witty repartee sometimes turned the joke on those who attempted to interrupt or "guy" him. "The pastor, and sometimes the village lawyer or doctor, tested him with Latin and Greek phrases. He responded in Dutch, a knowledge of which he had picked up in his childhood. They supposed this to be Hebrew, and retreated or took sides with him as competent to preach. But above all he was evidently an earnest and devout man; he prayed mightily and preached overwhelmingly."

In a New England village an honest blacksmith kept his household confined at home "lest they should become infected with the itinerant's supposed heterodoxy." A little lad of twelve years of age was not allowed to hear the preacher, but was deeply impressed with the strange tales of his work of faith and labor of love. "He

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was destined to become Lee's greatest successor in this very field and to do more important services for American Methodism than any other man recorded in its history save Asbury. Such was Dr. Nathan Bangs's first knowledge of Methodism."

The following anecdote, referred to by Dr. Stevens, shows Lee's cheery sense of humor. He had been preaching in a town during the session of the court, and had dealt rather faithfully with the lawyers, two of whom were disposed to make merry at his expense. While riding along to another appointment he perceived them "hastening after him on horseback, with evident expectations of amusement. They entered into conversation with him on extemporaneous speaking. 'Don't you often make mistakes?' 'Yes.' 'Well, what do you do with them—let them go?' 'Sometimes I do,' replied the preacher, dryly; 'if they are very important I correct them; if not, or if they express the truth, though differently from what I designed, why, I often let them go. For instance, if in preaching I should wish to quote the text which says, "The devil is a liar, and the father of it," and should happen to misquote it and say he was a "lawyer," etc., why, it is so near the truth I should probably let it pass.' The gentlemen of the bar looked at each other

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and were soon in advance, hastening on their way."

As the winter came on it was too cold and stormy to preach under the Boston elm, and it was almost impossible to get the use of a house, although continuous efforts were made for four weeks. After paying his board Lee had but two shillings and one penny left. But, he adds, "If I can always have two shillings by me besides paying all I owe I think I shall be satisfied."

"No man," says Dr. Stevens, "of less cheerful temperament could have brooked the chilling treatment he encountered while traveling the New England States without a colleague and without sympathy. This solitariness in a strange land, often without the stimulus of even persecution, but rendered doubly chilling by universal indifference or the most frigid politeness, was one of the strongest tests of his character."

Such faithful preaching was not without hallowed results. In many of the towns and villages of New England little companies of Methodists were formed—as at Boston, Lynn, Needham, Providence, Pawtucket, Warren, and Bristol. By the beginning of this century nearly six thousand members were enrolled.

Lee continued to itinerate as far as the head waters of the Penobscot, the Kennebec, the

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

Merrimac, and the Hudson, and even into the then wilderness of Canada. For the remaining sixteen years of his life his Conference appointments were in the South, but he was permitted once more to visit the scene of his early triumphs and trials, the now flourishing circuits of New England Methodism. Where once he was received with coldness and disdain he was now welcomed with heartiest good will. "At Monmouth, where the first society was formed," he writes, "they cannot get into the house." Many, after the service, came to the altar to give him their hands in pledge of meeting him in heaven. "They wept, and I could not refrain from weeping."

He labored on with unflagging zeal to the very last. After preaching at a camp meeting in Maryland he was seized with a chill, which was followed by a fatal fever. His illness was brief, but his end was joyous and triumphant. So passed away, in his fifty-eighth year, one of the most noteworthy founders of Methodism in New England or the Middle States.

Coke and Asbury, the pioneer bishops of American Methodism, were soon joined by noble comrades in office and in toil. Richard Whatcoat was the last of the bishops of British birth, and but for a short time bore the honors and endured the labors of the episcopate. He was

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

born in Clinton, England, in 1736. He was converted in early manhood and became class leader and steward at Wednesbury, where the



BISHOP WHATCOAT.

Wesleys and Whitefield had been so bitterly persecuted.

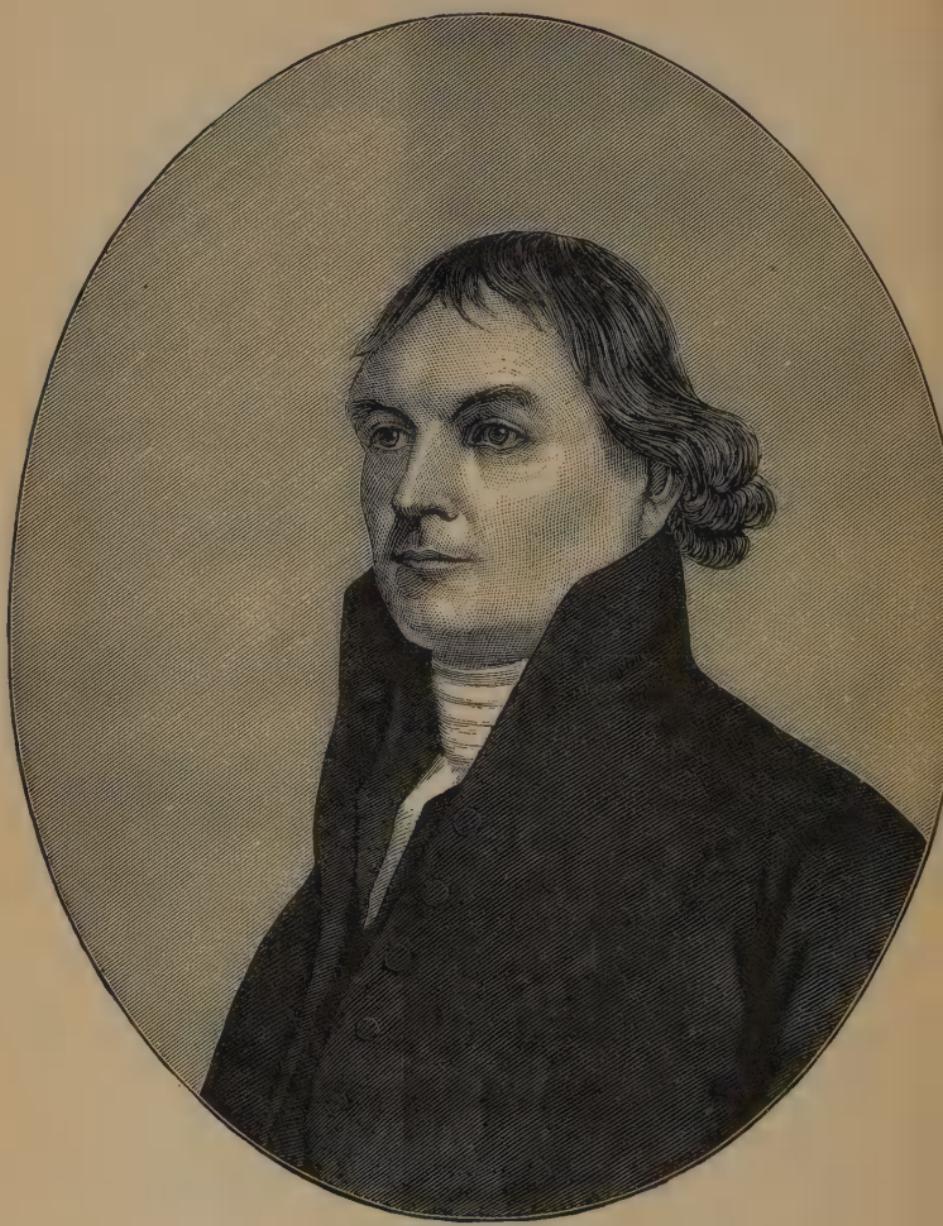
He accompanied Dr. Coke to America at the close of the Revolutionary War, and throughout a wide region administered the ordinances of

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

religion to a people who had been long without an ordained minister. He traveled much with Asbury, from Georgia to Maine, and in 1800 was elected bishop, the votes being nearly equally divided between him and Jesse Lee. He was the first of the American bishops to pass away, dying in the year 1806. One who knew him well remarks: "I think I may safely say if I ever knew one who came up to St. James's description of a perfect man, one who bridled his tongue and kept in subjection his whole body, that man was Bishop Whatcoat."

William McKendree was the first of the heroic band of native-born bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a preacher of transcendent power, an ecclesiastical administrator of almost unrivaled ability, a man of the saintliest character, and was the chief founder of Methodism in the great and growing West. Like Jesse Lee he was born in Virginia, and about the same time, 1757. During the Revolutionary War he was a volunteer in the service of his country. He entered the army as a private, but was soon advanced to the rank of adjutant, and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

In 1787, under the preaching of John Easter, famous for his soul-stirring eloquence, he was soundly converted. Easter strongly urged him



BISHOP MCKENDREE.

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

to preach, but after a few efforts he returned home "fearful that he had run before he was called." But Bishop Asbury recognized his innate worth, and sent forth the beardless boy to the rugged mountain region beyond the Blue Ridge, and through Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Ohio, and Illinois—"a region which was being rapidly settled, with a population as mixed in creed as Joseph's coat was in colors." Within twelve years of his ordination he became one of the foremost men of American Methodism, and in 1808, at fifty-one, was elected fourth bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His evangelistic zeal and wise administration did much to consolidate the growing Methodism of the New West.

In these days of travel in Pullman cars it is difficult to conceive the hardships and privations of the early itinerancy. The pioneer preacher was exposed to perils from savage beasts and still more savage men—the hostile Indians, and sometimes the hostile whites. Often he slept upon the ground, with nothing but the sky and the twinkling stars, those "thoughts of God," above his head. The people themselves lived in rude shacks, or shanties, but they were glad to welcome the forest itinerant to their humble homes and to share with him their simple fare.

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McKendree was a man of magnetic eloquence and soul-saving power. When called to preach before the General Conference in 1808, such was the divine unction that accompanied the word that Bishop Asbury said at its close, "That sermon will make McKendree a bishop." And it did. Before the Conference was over he was elected to that high office, which carried with it only preeminence in hardship and toil.

The time had now come for the more thorough organization of American Methodism, and Bishop McKendree was the ecclesiastical statesman by whom this was to be accomplished. Says Dr. Lovejoy, "The testimony of history will establish the truth of the statement that from 1808 till to-day the wisdom and solidity of Methodism as a rational, Scriptural system of evangelical propaganda bear the ineffaceable impress of William McKendree."

Hitherto the Annual Conferences claimed the power to change any part of the Discipline. Bishop McKendree saw that, to use the words of Dr. Lovejoy, "Unless a permanent basis be established, and the tie that binds the various parts together be an unvarying quantity, the unity that is desired becomes a hopeless dream."

With the aid of Jesse Lee, Joshua Soule, and other wise ecclesiastical leaders, Bishop McKendree was one of the prime movers for a

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

delegated General Conference, which was destined to give a unity and permanency to the legislation of Methodism. For twenty-seven years he continued to serve with unfaltering fidelity and unrestful toil the rapidly growing Church, especially in the vast region of the New West. He died in 1835, at the residence of his brother, near Nashville, Tenn. As his spirit passed into the skies his latest utterance was, "All is well."

Enoch George, the fifth bishop of American Methodism, was also born in the Old Dominion, which has given so many distinguished men to both Church and State. Under the preaching of the same John Easter who was the means of the conversion of Bishop McKendree he was brought to God. He was called of God and the Church to preach on the frontier. He was sent by Bishop Asbury to form a circuit in the picturesque mountain region of the Catawba and Broad Rivers in North Carolina. On the death of Bishop Asbury, in 1816, Enoch George and Robert Roberts were elected to carry on the supervision of the growing Church. On account of ill health Bishop George was unable to perform the prodigies of toil of his predecessors. He was, however, a man of earnest piety, of great simplicity of manner, a pathetic and powerful preacher; greatly beloved in life and

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

much lamented in death. He passed away after twelve years of episcopal service.

Robert Richford Roberts, who was elected bishop with Enoch George at the General Conference of 1816, was born in Maryland in 1778. Converted at the age of fifteen, he began while yet a youth to exercise his gifts and graces for the glory of God. He soon reached prominence, and filled appointments in Baltimore, Georgetown, and Philadelphia. He was the first married man in America who was elected bishop. It was not for worldly emolument that men accepted that high office. The official salary being exceedingly small, Bishop Roberts derived his support chiefly from a farm which he owned in Pennsylvania, he himself, meanwhile, traveling extensively from Maine to Mississippi. He was eminently a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. These extensive travels and labors he maintained for seven and twenty years.

But time would fail to enumerate the great and godly men who succeeded to the high office and strenuous toil of the American episcopate. At the General Conference of 1824 Joshua Soule and Elijah Hedding were added to the number. The Church went far north for one of these new bishops. Joshua Soule was born in Bristol, Me., in 1781, and was licensed to preach at

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

the early age of seventeen. With McKendree he shared the honor of being the author of the plan for a delegated General Conference. At the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1844, Bishop Soule remained with his Southern brethren, and continued till enfeebled by age to exercise his episcopal functions. He was a man of superior intellect and of great energy. He was a useful, popular, and sometimes an overwhelming preacher and an able administrator.

Elijah Hedding, elected bishop at the same General Conference as Joshua Soule, was born in Dutchess County, N. Y., in 1780. As a youth, being a good scholar for the times, he was appointed to read on Sunday afternoon one of Wesley's sermons to the little village community in Vermont, whither his father's family had removed. The conversation of a pious lady led to his conversion and to his entering upon a ministry of great usefulness and power. After his election as bishop he discharged with great ability the duties of his office for nearly twenty-eight years. He was prompt in duty, wise in counsel, and of earnest piety. "Anxious days and sleepless nights and strong intercessions with God showed his deep solicitude for the prosperity of the churches."

For fifty-one years he bore the toils and bur-

## MAKERS OF METHODISM

dens of itinerancy, as elder and bishop traversing the continent from Penobscot, in Maine, to the Colorado, in Texas. He writes thus of his labors:

"I have averaged over three thousand miles' travel a year and preached on an average a sermon a day since I commenced the itinerant life. I have never in this time owned a traveling vehicle but have ridden on horseback, except occasionally in winter, when I have borrowed a sleigh, and also a few instances in which I have traveled by public conveyance or a borrowed carriage. I have both labored hard and fared hard. Until recently I have had no dwelling place or home; but, as a wayfaring man, lodged from night to night where hospitality and friendship opened the way. I have traveled many a day in summer and winter without dinner because I had not a quarter of a dollar that I could spare to buy it. Such are some of the difficulties the Methodist preachers have been compelled to encounter, especially in New England, during the past ten years. But, notwithstanding all, God has been with us. Revivals have spread through all the country, and multitudes have been added to the little and despised flock."

This life of toil he kept up till his seventy-first year. In his last illness he had special revelations of the love of God. His dying testi-

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

mony is as follows: “I have served God more than fifty years. I have generally had peace, but I never saw such glory before, such light, and such gloriousness, such beauty! O, I want to tell it to all the world! O, had I a trumpet voice,

‘Then would I tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour I have found!’

“For clear and strong intellect, broad and commanding views, administrative ability, and deep devotion, combined with amiability and gentleness, Bishop Hedding has had few equals, and possibly no superiors, in the Church.”

The last of the Methodist bishops whose career we will here sketch is John Emory. He was born in Maryland in 1789, and was converted in his seventeenth year and joined the Methodist Church. His father had designed him for the study of law and he had received a thorough academical and collegiate training. He, however, gave up worldly prospects of wealth and fame to become a Methodist preacher. His father strongly opposed his resolution, refused him a horse with which to fare forth as a “circuit rider,” and declined for two years to hear him preach, or even to receive letters from him.

But the young itinerant enjoyed the consolations of the grace of God. The energy and abil-



BISHOP EMORY.

## SOME EARLY PREACHERS AND BISHOPS

ity which would have won him success at the bar were devoted to the service of the Methodist Church in some of its leading appointments in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Baltimore, and Washington. In 1820 he was sent as representative to the British Conference, in 1824 was appointed Book Agent with Nathan Bangs, and in 1832 was elected bishop. His faithful discharge of the duties of this high calling was brought to a tragical close in three short years. While riding to his home near Baltimore he was thrown out of his carriage and was found bleeding and insensible by the roadside, and in a few hours he passed away.

The number of great and noble men who reached the high office of bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church has grown so great that we can simply give their names and dates of their election in the following tabular list.

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## MAKERS OF METHODISM

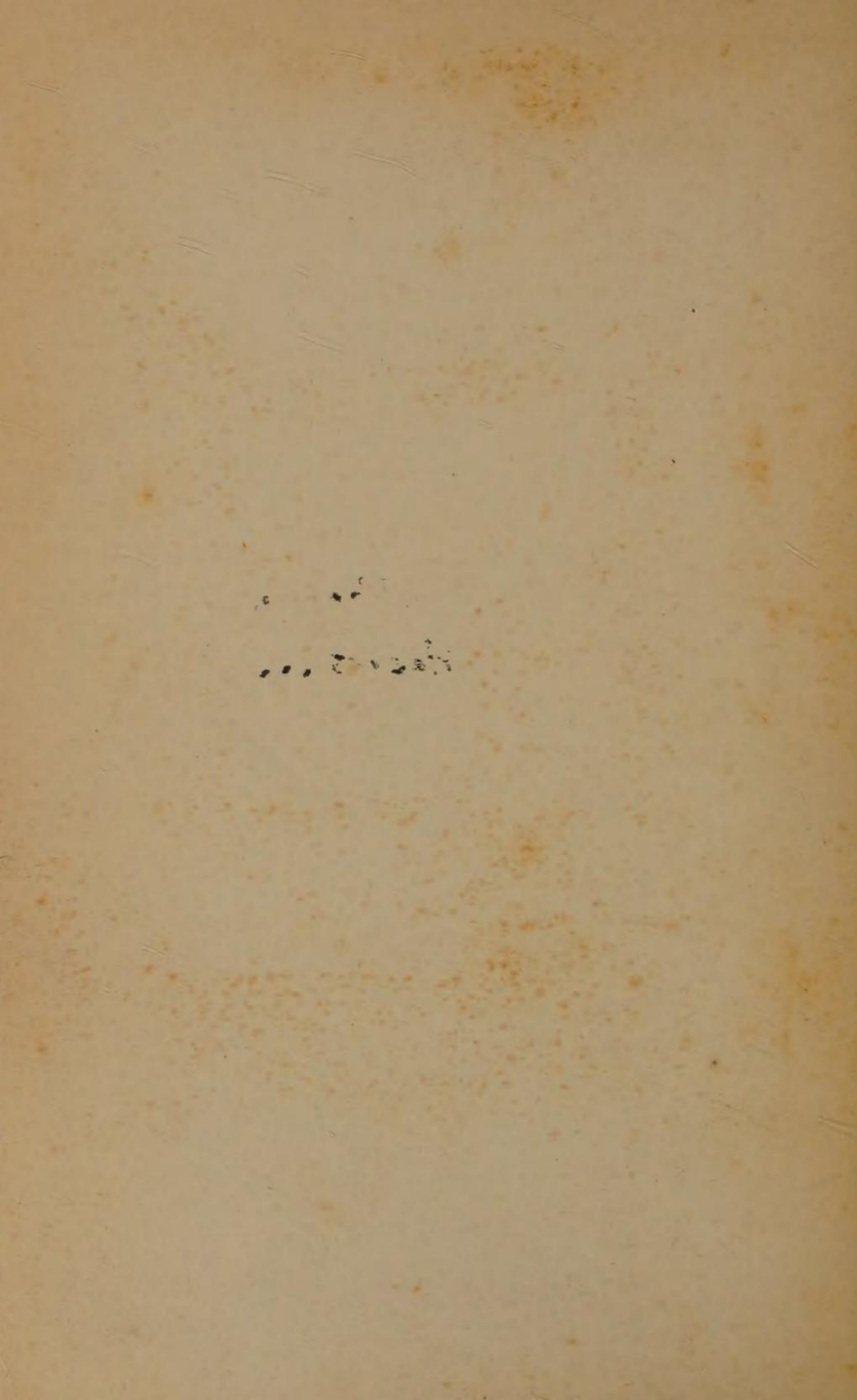
### LIST OF BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH FROM 1832.

Name.	Born.	Elected Bishop.	Died.
James O. Andrew.....	1794	1832	1871
Beverly Waugh.....	1789	1836	1858
Thomas A. Morris.....	1794	1836	1874
Leonidas L. Hamline.....	1797	1844	1865
Edmund S. Janes.....	1807	1844	1876
Levi Scott.....	1802	1852	1882
Matthew Simpson.....	1811	1852	1884
Osmon C. Baker.....	1812	1852	1871
Edward R. Ames.....	1806	1852	1879
Francis Burns.....	1809	1858	1863
Davis W. Clark.....	1812	1864	1871
Edward Thomson.....	1810	1864	1870
Calvin Kingsley.....	1812	1864	1870
John W. Roberts.....	1812	1866	1875
Thomas Bowman.....	1817	1872	....
William L. Harris.....	1817	1872	1887
Randolph S. Foster.....	1820	1872	....
Isaac W. Wiley.....	1825	1872	1884
Stephen M. Merrill.....	1825	1872	....
Edward G. Andrews.....	1825	1872	....
Gilbert Haven.....	1821	1872	....
Jesse T. Peck.....	1811	1872	....
Henry W. Warren.....	1831	1880	....
Cyrus D. Foss.....	1834	1880	....
John F. Hurst.....	1834	1880	....
Erastus O. Haven.....	1820	1880	1881
William X. Ninde.....	1832	1884	....
John M. Walden.....	1831	1884	....
Willard F. Mallalieu.....	1828	1884	....
Charles H. Fowler.....	1837	1884	....
John H. Vincent.....	1832	1888	....
James N. FitzGerald.....	1837	1888	....
Isaac W. Joyce.....	1836	1888	....
John P. Newman.....	1826	1888	....
Daniel A. Goodsell.....	1840	1888	....
Charles C. McCabe.....	1836	1896	....
Earl Cranston.....	1840	1896	....
William Taylor.....	1821	1884	....
James M. Thoburn.....	1836	1888	....
Joseph C. Hartzell.....	1842	1896	....









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of Huntingdon.—John Fletcher and Mary Bosanquet.—The be  
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hodism.—Francis Asbury, the pioneer bishop of America.—S  
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